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ABSTRACT

This report addresses the problem of school wastage in developing countries, provides the latest data on trends in repetition and drop-out, and deals with three questions: (1) how extensive is school wastage? (2) what are its causes? and (3) what can be done to make schools more efficient? Wastage is defined as the missed opportunities for individuals, communities, entire nations, and regions of the world. Finding ways to minimize 'school wastage' must play a central role in any serious effort to reach the goal of Education for All (EFA). Four parts are included in this report: (1) "The Goal of Education for All"; (2) "The Problem of School Wastage"; (3) "The High Cost of Wastage"; and (4) "What Can Be Done about School Wastage?" Many graphics and tables are included along with a glossary of 36 terms and a 20-item select bibliography. (LB)

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Education for All
Status and Trends 1998

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Wasted Opportunities:

When Schools Fail

Repetition and drop-out in primary schools

Education for All
Status and Trends 1998

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EFA Forum Secretariat
UNESCO
7 Place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP
France
Tel: +33 (0)1 45 68 08 90
Fax: +33 (0)1 45 68 56 29
E-mail: efa@unesco.org
Internet web site: http://www.education.unesco.org/efa

Editorial coordination ▸ Michael LAKIN
▸ Ulrika PEPPLER BARRY
Editorial consultant ▸ Jean O'SULLIVAN
Principal author ▸ Edward B. FISKE
Research consultant ▸ Mathias RWEHERA
Statistics supervision ▸ S. K. CHU
Statistics consultant ▸ Hilaire MPUTU
Graphic design ▸ Sylvaine BAEYENS
Printing ▸ GRAPHOPRINT

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Education is a prerequisite for development.

(Photo: © Agence Vu, Sophie Chivet)

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Introduction

Leaders in the developing countries generally understand the importance of investing in basic education. They recognize that high levels of literacy and numeracy are prerequisites for creating a competitive workforce and a nation of effective parents and active citizens.

But they also face an uphill battle in building education systems capable of providing basic education for all children, youth and adults. Financial and human resources are scarce, so difficult decisions must be made in determining how best to allocate them. Thus it is imperative that scarce resources be used as efficiently as possible.

Unfortunately, this is not what is happening. Although significant progress has been made in increasing the number of pupils enrolled in school in developing countries, these gains are undermined by the persistently large number of pupils who take more than one year to complete a particular grade and/or who drop out of school before completing even the primary cycle.

Repeating grades and dropping out exact a terrible personal toll on the pupils involved and absorb a large share of the limited resources available for education. Finding ways to minimize 'school wastage' must play a central role in any serious effort to reach the goal of Education for All (EFA).

Wastage is about missed opportunities for individuals, communities, entire nations and regions of the world. It deprives developing countries of the ability to make the most efficient use of scarce resources and it takes its greatest toll on the most vulnerable groups in society. Finding ways to reduce school wastage must become an urgent priority for developing countries and their allies.

One of the great dangers facing the world today is the growing number of persons who are excluded from meaningful participation in the economic, social, political and cultural life of their communities. When critical masses of individuals or groups become marginalized, society itself becomes polarized. We appear to be moving toward a world in which wealth of all kinds – economic assets, social capital, political influence and knowledge – is being concentrated in the hands of a privileged few. Such a world is one that is neither efficient nor just nor safe.

The many roots of this polarization include factors ranging from the globalization of the economy to the dismantling of welfare states. Unfortunately, education, which is often seen as a means of promoting equality, can also contribute to inequality. In today's knowledge-based society, those who obtain a good basic education can continue to learn throughout their lives and thus remain economically viable, while those lacking a solid educational foundation are destined to fall further and further behind. Reducing school wastage is thus a critical necessity on ethical and economic grounds.

Low learning achievement, although not falling strictly into the traditional definition of internal efficiency, is considered these days as perhaps the most important, if not the ultimate, aspect of wastage in education. The next issue of *Education for All: Status and Trends,* will focus on learning achievement.

This issue of *Education for All: Status and Trends* addresses the problem of school wastage in developing countries, provides the latest data on trends in repetition and drop-out, and deals with three questions:

- How extensive is school wastage?
- What are its causes?
- What can be done to make schools more efficient?

The goal of

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In education, equity and quality go hand in hand. (Photo: © Christopher Barry)

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Education for All

Part I

The realization that basic education is both a necessity and a fundamental human right has long been recognized by the international community.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, asserted that 'everyone has a right to education', and subsequent international conferences and normative texts have reaffirmed this goal and sought to achieve it.

During International Literacy Year (1990), the World Conference on Education for All was convened in Jomtien, Thailand, to address concerns about the inadequate provision of basic education, especially in the developing countries. The conference adopted the *World Declaration on Education for All* and agreed on a *Framework for Action to Meet Basic Learning Needs*. The Declaration begins by affirming that 'every person – child, youth and

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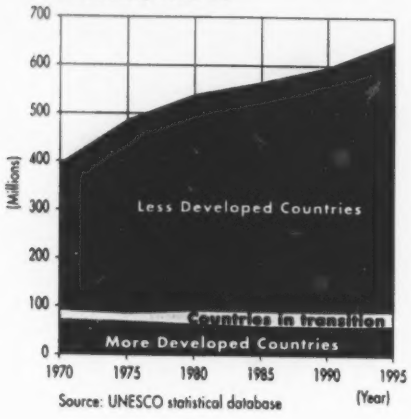
adult – shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs' and then outlines an 'expanded vision' of basic education that can make this possible.

The *Framework for Action* calls upon countries to adopt policies and practices that would ensure 'Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher level of education is considered as "basic") by the year 2000'. It also urges countries to pursue 'Improvement in learning achievement such that an agreed percentage of an appropriate age cohort (e.g. 80 per cent of 14-year-olds) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement'.

Achieving the goals embraced at Jomtien requires not only that children be admitted to school when they are of age, but that they complete the entire primary cycle and, equally important, actually learn at an appropriate level. It is generally agreed that at least four years of schooling are necessary for pupils to acquire the basic literacy and numeracy skills needed to become continuing learners, so the following analysis gives particular attention to the proportion of pupils completing Grade 4 or reaching Grade 5.

FIGURE 1

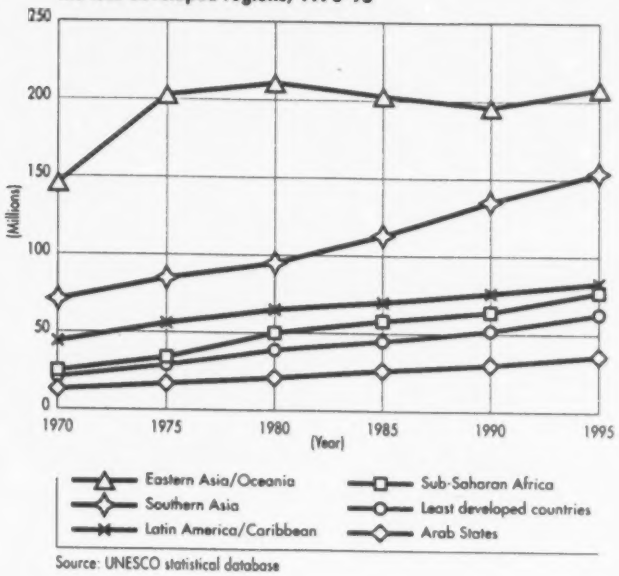
Global enrolment trends in primary education, 1970-95



Source: UNESCO statistical database

FIGURE 2

Enrolment trends in primary education in the less developed regions, 1970-95



Source: UNESCO statistical database

Considerable progress has been made over the last quarter century in expanding the capacity of primary school systems in all regions of the world. As shown in **Figure 1**, the overall number of primary school pupils rose from an estimated 396 million in 1970 to some 540 million in 1980 and to 650 million in 1995. If this rate of expansion were to continue, the number of pupils in the world's primary schools could reach 750 million by the year 2005 and 845 million by 2015.

Since the more developed countries and the countries in transition (see country lists in Annex II) had already achieved universal primary education before 1970, the subsequent expansion in primary school enrolments is almost entirely attributable to gains in the developing countries, where the number of pupils increased from 305 million (representing 77 per cent of the global enrolment) in 1970 to 561 million (i.e. 86 per cent of the global enrolment) in 1995. **Figure 2** shows the upward trend in enrolments over the past twenty-five years in each of the less developed regions. This general trend is also evident in the improved net enrolment ratios between 1985 and 1995 (**Figure 3**). These ratios take into account only those children who are in the official school age-group concerned, which varies from country to country.

This expansion of enrolments generally outpaced population growth. However, the total number of school-age children not enrolled in school in the less developed regions rose from about 90 million in 1985 to some 110 million in 1990, before declining to about 83 million in 1995. Sub-Saharan Africa is the exception to this general trend: the number of unenrolled African children actually increased by 12 million between 1985 and 1995 (**Figure 4**).

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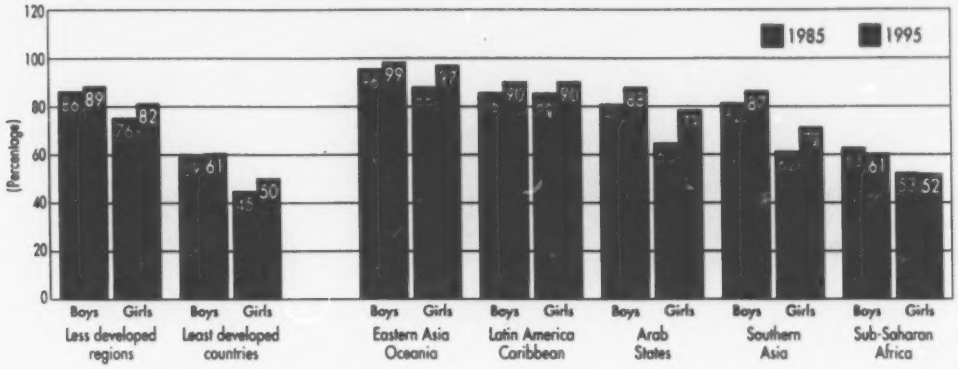
FIGURE 3

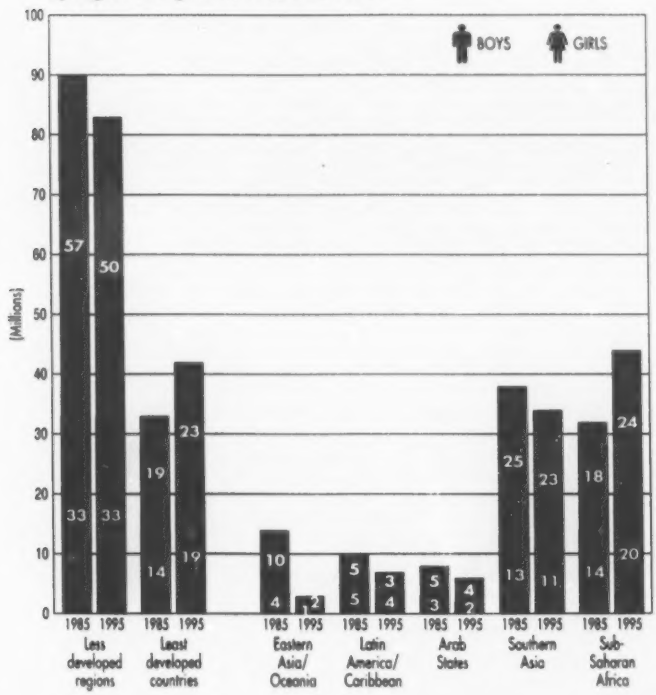
Estimated net enrolment ratios in primary education, by region and gender, 1985 and 1995



Unfortunately, growth in enrolments and school capacity has not been matched by gains in ensuring that pupils persist in their schooling and emerge from primary school with the knowledge and skills they need to function as workers, parents and citizens. Today, in the less developed regions as a whole, only three out of four pupils can be expected to reach Grade 5, i.e. completing at least the four years of schooling generally considered necessary for achieving sustainable literacy skills. Thus the expected benefits of increased enrolments are being undermined by significant levels of drop-out, an acute symptom of school wastage. ■

FIGURE 4

Estimated unenrolled primary school-age population, by region and gender, 1985 and 1995



These figures take into account only those children who are in the official school age-group concerned, which varies from country to country.

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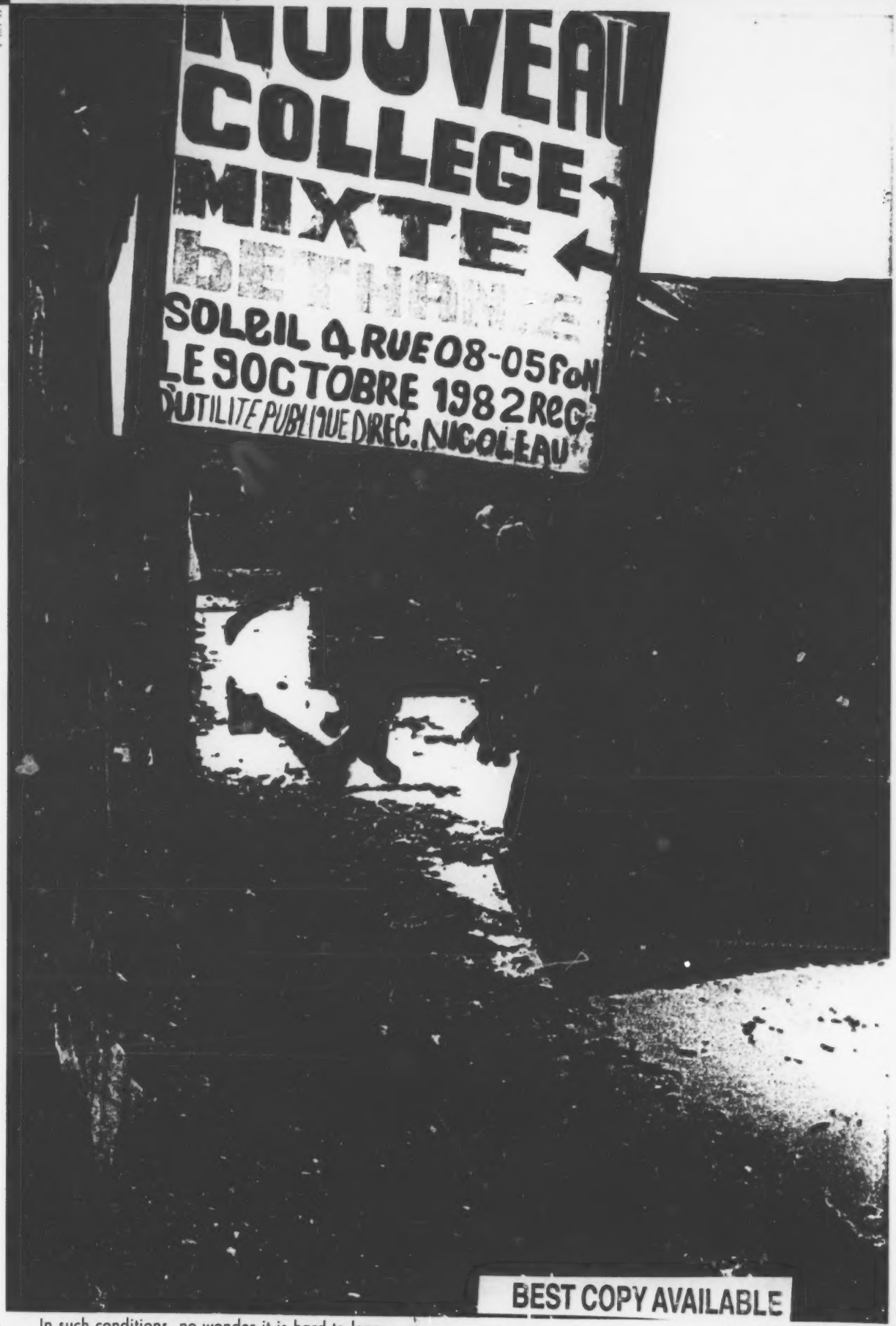

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10 In such conditions, no wonder it is hard to learn. (Photo © Agence Vu, Lam Duc)

Part II

The problem of school wastage

In a very broad sense, the phenomenon of primary-school wastage is evident in the large numbers of children who, for one reason or another, do not succeed in acquiring the full range of skills offered through primary schooling.

No doubt the most serious and harmful wastage is evident in the 84 million primary-school-age children who are not enrolled in school, of which three out of five are girls. (See Table 1)

Another, but less evident, form of wastage concerns the pupils who complete the primary cycle but fail to gain the intellectual, social, cultural and ethical knowledge and skills that schooling should provide. Surveys in industrialized and developing countries alike have found, for example, that a substantial proportion of children complete their primary-school education without acquiring even an adequate mastery of reading. Children who never gain access to school and those who enrol but do not attain an adequate level of learning constitute a tragic waste of the human, social and economic potential of the countries concerned.

A more narrow, operational definition of school wastage refers to pupils who do not complete their schooling in the prescribed number of years either because they drop out of school entirely or because they repeat one or more grades. It is this concept of wastage – involving drop-outs and repeaters, especially at the primary-school level – that is examined in this report.

Of course, wastage is also a serious problem in non-formal education programmes, such as adult literacy courses. However, data on such programmes are not readily available and the issues involved are often quite different from those affecting schooling. Consequently, this report focuses entirely on wastage in the formal primary-school system.

TABLE 1 Estimated net enrolment ratios and numbers of primary-school-age population out of school, around 1995

	Coverage		Net enrolment rates (%)			Unenrolled (in thousands) (coverage: all countries)		
	No. of Countries	% school-age population	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
World total	**126**	**82**	**87.1**	**90.0**	**84.0**	**84,331**	**33,402**	**50,917**
More developed regions	**21**	**95**	**99.5**	**99.3**	**99.8**	**275**	**216**	**59**
Countries in transition	**15**	**64**	**96.6**	**96.8**	**96.6**	**947**	**471**	**476**
Less developed regions	**90**	**82**	**85.2**	**88.7**	**81.6**	**83,097**	**32,714**	**50,383**
Sub-Saharan Africa	*29*	*52*	*56.5*	*60.7*	*52.3*	*44,360*	*20,132*	*24,227*
Arab States	*16*	*74*	*83.6*	*88.3*	*78.7*	*6,743*	*2,437*	*4,305*
Latin America/Caribbean	*26*	*99*	*90.4*	*90.4*	*90.4*	*7,112*	*3,616*	*3,496*
Eastern Asia/Oceania	*13*	*85*	*98.0*	*98.7*	*97.3*	*3,608*	*1,206*	*2,401*
Southern Asia	*5*	*87*	*79.5*	*86.7*	*71.7*	*33,905*	*11,308*	*22,597*
(Least developed countries)	*29*	*78*	*55.6*	*60.8*	*50.4*	*41,607*	*18,585*	*23,022*

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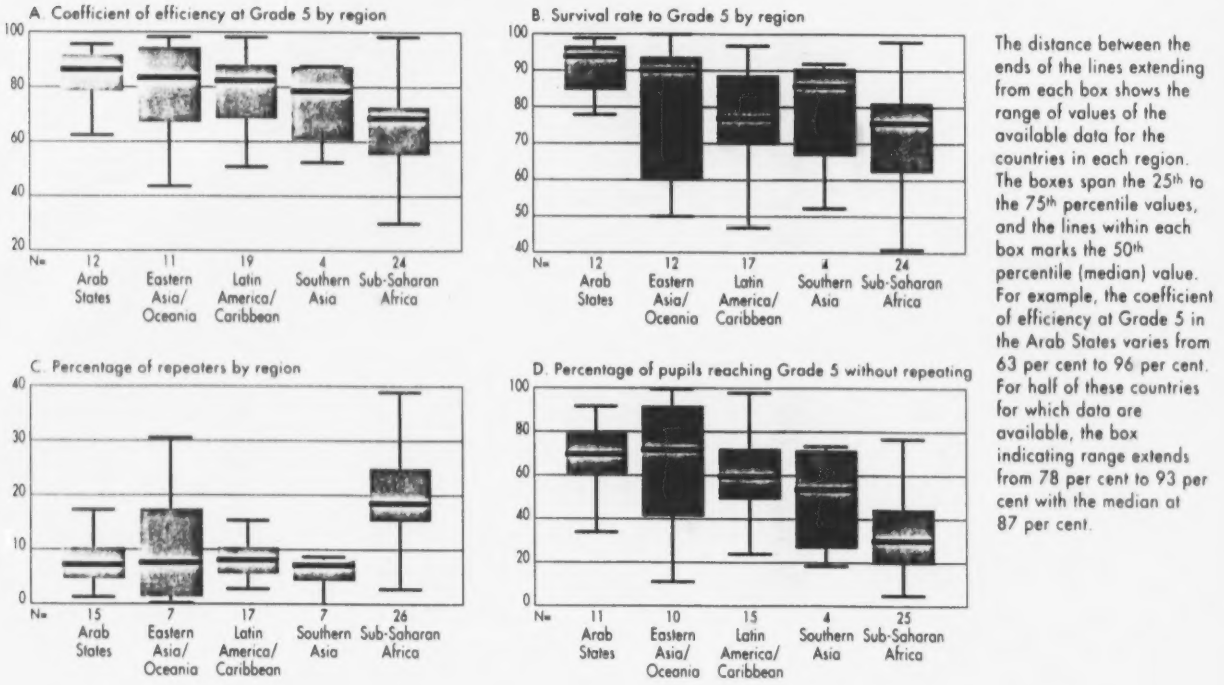
Measuring school wastage

A major objective of Education for All is to ensure that children throughout the world have access to basic education, actually acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills, and develop the capacity for autonomous learning. Since the resources made available to schools for this important mission are often inadequate, they need to be efficient in moving pupils through each cycle of education in a timely fashion, see Box 1: How is school efficiency measured?

For the purpose of measuring the 'internal efficiency' of a school system, it is generally assumed that all pupils entering Grade 1 should complete the primary school cycle within a prescribed number of years. To the extent that pupils drop out of school or repeat grades, the system is considered inefficient. Figure 5 shows the pronounced variation within and across the less developed regions of four 'synthetic indicators' that bring together data that reflect important aspects of the internal efficiency of primary school systems. The distance between the ends of the lines extending from each box shows the range of values of the available data for the countries in each region. The red boxes span the 25th to the 75th percentile values, and the line within each box marks the 50th percentile (median) value.

FIGURE 5

Internal efficiency of primary education in the less developed regions, around 1995



The distance between the ends of the lines extending from each box shows the range of values of the available data for the countries in each region. The boxes span the 25th to the 75th percentile values, and the lines within each box marks the 50th percentile (median) value. For example, the coefficient of efficiency at Grade 5 in the Arab States varies from 63 per cent to 96 per cent. For half of these countries for which data are available, the box indicating range extends from 78 per cent to 93 per cent with the median at 87 per cent.

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BOX 1. HOW IS SCHOOL EFFICIENCY MEASURED?

The concept of 'efficiency', as used by economists, refers to the relationship between the inputs into a system (such as seeds, lumber or pupils) and the outputs from that system (e.g. wheat, chairs or graduates). However, measuring the efficiency of education systems is problematic due to difficulties in defining and measuring educational outputs, as well as in quantifying the relationship between inputs and outputs.

An education system is considered to be efficient if it produces at a minimum cost the desired output in terms of a maximum number of young people who have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills prescribed by society. Stated differently, an education system is considered efficient if for a given input of resources (human, financial and material) it maximizes the desired output, both in quantity and quality.

While recognizing that education has various objectives, educational statisticians and planners measure the output of the school system in a simple way. They assume that the output of a given cycle of education is the number of pupils who complete the cycle, i.e. the graduates. Of course, this is a rather restricted definition since even the pupils who dropped out of school no doubt acquired some of the knowledge and skills that the system intended to teach them. Nevertheless, this way of measuring output still gives some useful insights into the functioning of an education system.

Educational inputs comprise the buildings, teachers, books and other learning materials, which may be aggregated and expressed in terms of expenditure per pupil per year. One pupil who spends one year at school is said to have spent one pupil-year. The usual input indicator that corresponds to output measured in terms of graduates (or those who complete Grade 5, for example) is the number of pupil-years used by a given pupil cohort (i.e. a group of pupils that enters the first year of school together). To some extent, the amount of inputs expressed in monetary terms is related to the number of pupil-years used to produce the output.

The coefficient of efficiency is one synthetic indicator of educational efficiency. It summarizes the consequences of repetition and drop-out in the educational process leading to the 'production' of graduates. It is calculated as the ratio, expressed as a percentage, between:

I) the optimal number of pupil-years that would be required to complete a cycle of education if no pupils repeated grades or dropped out and

II) the actual number of pupil-years spent by a pupil cohort to complete the cycle. Any additional years spent to graduate pupils beyond the prescribed duration of a cycle of studies constitute an inefficient allocation of resources, yielding a coefficient of efficiency of less than 100 per cent (or unity).

Thus if it takes a cohort on average six years to complete a four-year primary cycle, the coefficient of efficiency would be 0.66, indicating a system operating at only two-thirds efficiency and 'wasting' one-third of its resources on repeaters and drop-outs.

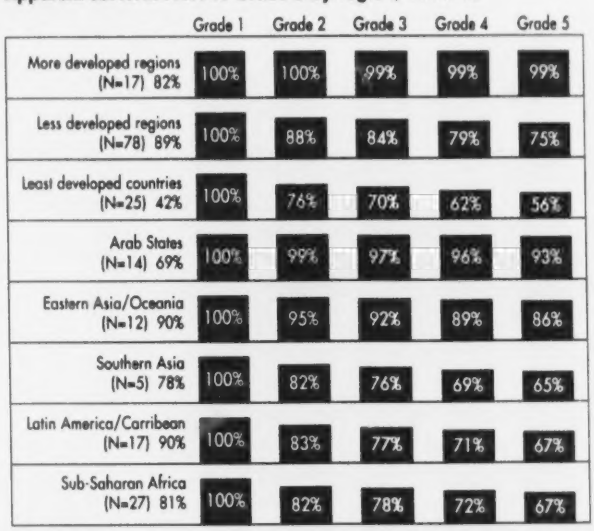
The input-output ratio, which is the reciprocal of coefficient of efficiency, is often used as an alternative measure. The optimum input-output point is also unity, but any value greater than one indicates inefficiency. In the example above, the input-output ratio would be 1.5 (6 divided by 4)

Since the length of the primary school cycle varies from country to country, it may not be meaningful to make comparisons of school efficiency across countries. To improve comparability, therefore, the analysis of school wastage in this report is based on internal efficiency indicators that have been calculated using Grade 5 as the common reference point, as this is the grade at which a pupil is assumed to have achieved sustainable literacy.

The converse of 'drop-out' is 'survival' or 'retention', meaning that the pupil survives, or is retained, in the primary cycle. The survival rate used in this report indicates the percentage of pupils who enrol together in Grade 1 (a pupil cohort) that eventually reaches Grade 5.

FIGURE 6

Apparent survival rates to Grade 5 by region, 1994-95



In the first column, N is the number of countries in the region for which pertinent data are available for calculating the movement of a pupil cohort through five years of schooling. The percentage next to it shows the share of these countries in the total enrolment of the region.

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BOX 2. ANALYSING SCHOOL WASTAGE

To measure internal efficiency and wastage in education, statisticians and planners use techniques similar to those of cohort analysis in demography. A 'cohort' is a group of persons who jointly experience a series of specific events over a period of time. Accordingly, a pupil cohort is a group of pupils who enter the first grade of a school cycle in the same year and who normally move through the cycle together. However, the pupils experience promotion, repetition, drop-out or successful completion of the final grade each in his or her own way.

There are three ways to analyse wastage in education by examining data on the flow of pupils in a cohort, depending on what data are available. The best way to obtain an accurate assessment of wastage is through the true cohort method, which involves either a longitudinal study of a pupil cohort through a full educational cycle or a retrospective study of school records to retrace the flow of pupils through the grades over the years. This method, however, is costly and time-consuming, and requires reliable school records with data on individual pupils. Consequently, this method is not generally used.

In the absence of individual pupil data, the apparent cohort method can be used when there are no data on repetition. School wastage is assessed using enrolment data by grade for at least two consecutive years. Enrolment in Grade 1 in a given year is compared with enrolment in the consecutive grades during the following years and any decrease in enrolment from one grade to the next is assumed to be due to drop-out. This commonly used method produces very approximative estimates of efficiency and wastage. Its main weakness is that it ignores repetition, so this method is appropriate only for countries that practice automatic promotion.

The reconstructed cohort method is less dependent on detailed data over time. Enrolment data by grade for two consecutive years and data on repetition by grade from the first to the second year are sufficient to measure the three main flow-rates: promotion, repetition and drop-out. These rates can be analysed by grade to study the patterns of repetition and drop-out. They can also be used to reconstruct the pupil cohort flow to derive other indicators of internal efficiency. (See also Box 1.)

Dropping out of school

An obvious and blatant form of wastage involves pupils who start school but drop out before they reach a level of sustainable literacy and numeracy.

Drop-out at the primary level is virtually non-existent in industrialized countries because they enforce compulsory education laws. In the less developed regions, however, early drop-out is a major problem. Of the approximately 96 million pupils who entered school for the first time in 1995, one quarter (24 million) are likely to abandon their schooling before they reach Grade 5.

Figure 6 shows the apparent survival rates to Grade 5 of pupils in different regions of the world based on data for 1994-95 reported by a substantial number of countries. The more developed regions show survival rates that approach 100 per cent, but in the less developed regions as a whole, only three out of four pupils reach Grade 5. The situation in the cross-regional sub-group of least developed countries is even more grim, with barely half (56 per cent) of the pupils remaining in school after Grade 4.

A closer analysis of the survival rates, shows that boys persist in school at slightly higher rates than do girls, except in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in the more developed regions (**Figure 7**). However, the more important disparity between boys and girls is evident in the overall enrolment figures for the less developed regions. Three-quarters of the 8 million school entrance-age children who did not enter school in 1994-95 were girls (**Figure 8**). This gender disparity at the beginning of schooling generally continues throughout the primary cycle, as can be seen in the gap between the net enrolment ratios of boys and girls (**Figure 9**).

As seen earlier (**Figure 6**), much dropping out of school occurs between the first and second grades. In the less developed regions taken together, nearly half of all drop-out occurs before pupils reach Grade 2. The exception is the Arab States, where the overall survival rate to Grade 5 is high, but most drop-out occurs between Grades 4 and 5.

FIGURE 7

Apparent survival rates to Grade 5, by region and gender, 1994-95

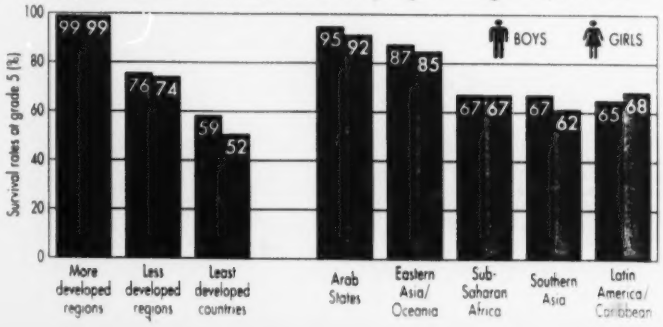

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FIGURE 8

Population of primary-school entrance age in the less developed regions around 1993: access, expected survival and drop-out by gender

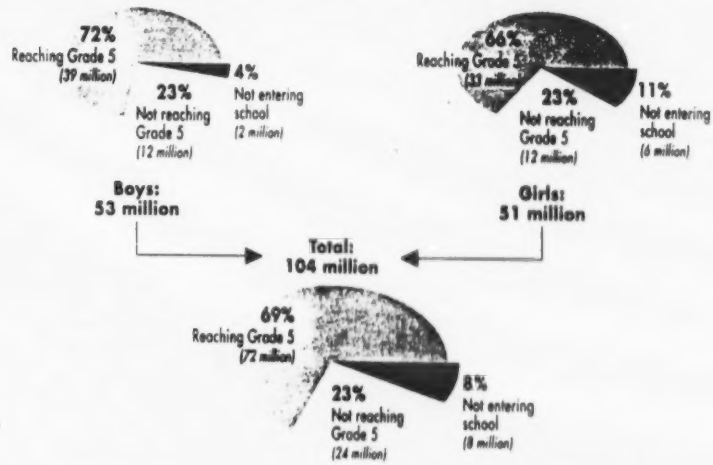
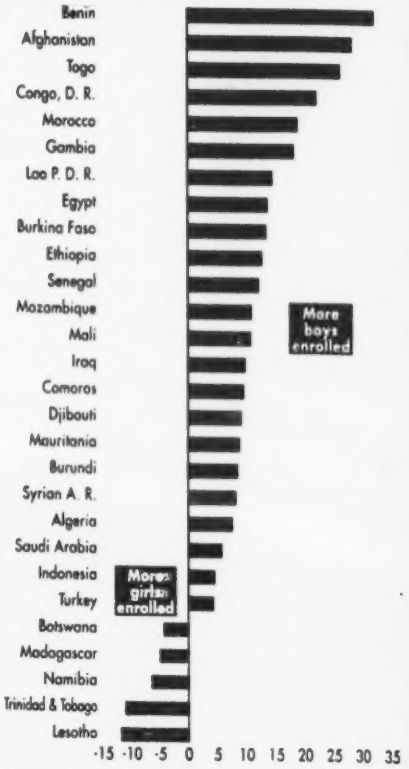


FIGURE 9

Gap between net enrolment ratios of boys and girls, 1995



Countries where the gender gap is less than or equal to 3 percentage points are not shown in this figure.

The pattern of substantial drop-out occurring at the beginning of the primary school cycle is particularly distressing because pupils with only a year or two of schooling leave in a state of near illiteracy.

However, the overall survival rates to Grade 5 appear to be improving in a number of countries for which data are available.

BOX 3. WHAT HAPPENS TO DROP-OUTS?

Rural schools often have higher drop-out rates than do urban schools. An interesting tracer study in China looked into what happened to rural and urban children who dropped out of school. Among the primary school drop-outs in rural areas, nearly half (47.5 per cent) worked on farms, while 7.5 per cent were in part-time or other employment, compared with 27.3 per cent of the urban drop-outs who were in part-time employment. In both cases over one-third were staying at home.

Among children who dropped out of rural junior secondary schools, three out of five (61.2 per cent) were doing farm work, one out of five (21.5 per cent) had full-time or part-time jobs and just over 11 per cent were jobless. In urban areas the jobless rate doubled to slightly more than 22 per cent; 57 per cent had full-time or part-time jobs.

These findings, which were part of the Asian Regional Study of Wastage in Education, reflect the way socio-economic and environmental factors affect dropping out. This was further illustrated through a sample survey conducted in sixty of China's counties. It showed that the drop-out rate in counties with a low average per capita income (less than 300 yuan) was 4.3 per cent, while counties with an average per capita income of 300 to 800 yuan had a drop-out rate of 1.1 per cent. In counties with average per capita income of more than 800 yuan, the drop-out rate was 0.3 per cent.

Three out of five child workers live in Asia. (Photo: Agence Vu, Hien tam)

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BOX 4. DOES REPEATING GRADES HELP PUPILS?

Public schools in the United States have a long tradition of having pupils repeat grades when they are not succeeding in their schoolwork. However, dozens of studies over the last two decades have shown that retaining pupils in a grade can be counter-productive, Lorrie Shepard and Mary Lee Smith concluded in a review of research on the subject. Contrary to popular beliefs, repeating a grade does not help students gain ground academically and has a negative impact on social adjustment and self-esteem.

No matter how much parents and educators try to portray repetition in a constructive light, pupils who do not progress to the next grade level with their peers invariably struggle with problems of self-esteem. Not surprisingly, researchers have found that repeaters tend to develop highly negative attitudes toward school. Repeating early grades frequently leads to further retention down the road, which in turn can lead to dropping out entirely. A report by the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development estimated that a single grade retention increases the likelihood of drop-out by 40 to 50 per cent. A second one raises the risk to 90 per cent.

During the 1980s, the public school system in New York City instituted a "promotional gates" programme that required pupils in Grades 4 and 8 to attain specified minimum scores on standardized reading and mathematics tests before moving on to the next grade. The programme was scrapped a few years later because the retained students who received no special academic support the following year continued to have academic difficulties. The presence of substantial numbers of older students repeating classes turned out to be disruptive and the repeaters dropped out in significant numbers.

In an article in the journal Phi Delta Kappan *(November 1997), Linda Darling-Hammond and Beverly Falk suggest three reasons why repetition does not work:*

- *Just because a pupil repeats an academic year does not mean that his or her natural social and intellectual cycles will be halted. Development is continuous, uneven and multi-dimensional, they write, and young children are often better served by a school structure that supports their continuous progress.*
- *The norm-referenced standardized tests used to make retention decisions are designed to produce a ranking of pupils, not to determine whether students have mastered a specific body of knowledge. The tests can easily underestimate a pupil's knowledge, especially when pupils are confused by the artificial format of such tests.*
- *Grade repetition presumes that the problem, if there is one, is attributable to the child rather than factors such as the quality of teaching or the school setting. Significantly, retention rates for children from low-income families are at least twice as high as those for children from high-income families. Since children from poor families are less likely to receive instruction from well-qualified and highly effective teachers, their academic difficulties are exacerbated, not solved, by grade retention.*

Being left behind doesn't help self-esteem. *(Photo: ©Agence Vu, Agnès Bonnot)*

Repeating grades

Another form of school wastage occurs when pupils have to repeat grades. In developing countries especially, this is often a prelude to drop-out.

School systems around the world differ widely in their policies toward pupils who fail to master the work appropriate to a particular grade level. In a majority of countries, both developed and developing, educators require such pupils to repeat the grade in order to give them additional time to learn material that they failed to master the first time around. Repetition is thus seen as a remedy for slow learners. The practice is typically applied in Grade 1 out of a conviction that it is important for pupils to get off to a good start in their education. However, repeating the final primary grade is also widespread in countries where admission to secondary school is based on passing an end-of-primary-school examination.

A minority of countries appear to believe that repetition creates more problems than it solves and therefore follow a policy of automatic promotion. Accordingly, pupils proceed to the next grade even when they have not mastered the material of the previous grade. Some educators argue that pupils who did not learn something the first time are not likely to benefit from repeating the same academic year. A wiser policy, they argue, is to provide such pupils additional assistance and allow them to proceed to the next grade with their peers.

The data in **Table 2** show that in the less developed regions together, about eight per cent of all pupils enrolled in primary school around 1995 were repeaters, and nearly one out of three pupils in Grade 1 was a repeater. Overall repetition rates are highest in sub-Saharan Africa and in Latin American and the Caribbean.

Because the incidence of repetition is largely determined by the attitudes and practices of educators in each country, the magnitude of repetition can vary considerably even among countries of comparable levels of educational and economic development. For example, Niger and Madagascar are both in the sub-group of least developed countries: each has a large proportion of people living on less than US$1 a day and a primary net enrolment ratio of less than 50 per cent. Nevertheless, Niger has a repetition rate of only 16 per cent, compared with 32 per cent in Madagascar.

Repetition rates appear to be declining in many developing countries. **Figure 10** shows that the percentage of pupils repeating their present grade declined between 1985 and 1995 in all less developed regions. However, this general trend did not apply to the sub-set of least developed countries, where the percentage of repeaters increased.

FIGURE 10
Percentage of repeaters in primary education, by region, 1985 and 1995

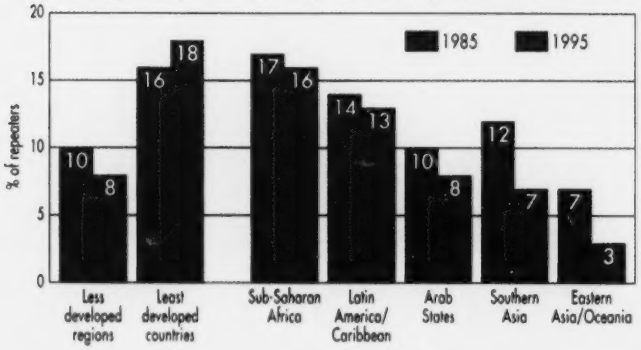

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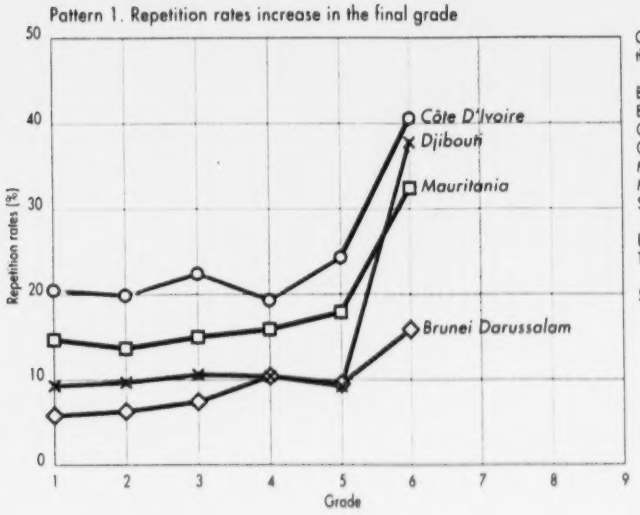
TABLE 2 **Estimated number of repeaters in primary education, by region, around 1985 and 1995**

Region	Estimated number of repeaters around 1985		Estimated number of repeaters around 1995			
	All grades		All grades		First grade only	
	(in thousand)	As % of enrolment	(in thousand)	As % of enrolment	(in thousand)	As % of all repeaters
Less developed regions	50,521	10	42,902	8	13,012	30
Sub-Saharan Africa	9,616	17	11,640	16	3,551	31
Arab States	2,550	10	2,814	8	485	17
Latin America/Caribbean	10,123	14	10,221	13	3,112	30
Eastern Asia/Oceania	15,142	7	6,936	3	3,077	44
Southern Asia	13,091	12	11,291	7	2,786	25
(Least developed countries)	7,505	16	11,220	18	3,964	35

FIGURE 11

Patterns of repetition by grade in primary school, selected countries, latest year available

Pattern 1. Repetition rates increase in the final grade



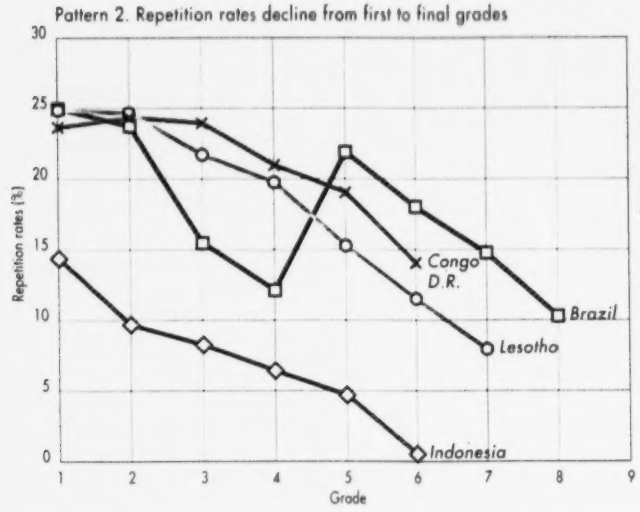
Other countries with the same patterns:

Benin
Burkina Faso
Comoros
Guinea
Malawi
Mali
Senegal

Egypt
Tunisia

Solomon Islands

Pattern 2. Repetition rates decline from first to final grades



Other countries with the same patterns:

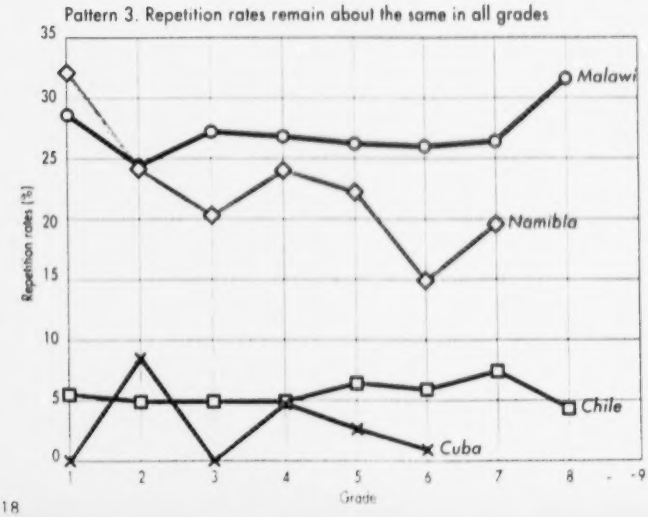
Congo
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Lesotho
Madagascar
Mozambique
Namibia
Swaziland
Togo

Bahrain
Morocco
Saudi Arabia
Syrian A. R.

China
Lao P. D. R.
Kiribati

Argentina
Colombia
Costa Rica
Ecuador
El Salvador
Honduras
Mexico
Nicaragua
Paraguay
Peru
Uruguay

Pattern 3. Repetition rates remain about the same in all grades



Other countries and territories with the same patterns:

Chad
Ethiopia

Algeria
Jordan
Oman
Palestine
Qatar
United Arab Emirates

Bhutan
Iran, I. R.
Sri lanka

Belize
Guyana

Repetition, like drop-out, tends to be more prevalent in the first and in the final grades of the primary school cycle, but repetition patterns vary considerably both within and between different countries) (Figure 11) and across the several regions (Figure 12). In general, however, the percentage of repeaters in Grade 1 exceeds the percentage of repeaters in all grades together (Figure 13).

The proportion of pupils reaching Grade 5 without repeating a grade also varies widely among countries. Figure 14 shows the gap between total survival rates to Grade 5 (i.e. including repeaters) and survival rates to Grade 5 without repetition for selected countries around 1994-95. The gap ranges from as little as two percentage points in Kiribati to as much as 51 percentage points in Lesotho. In Chad, less than one in ten pupils reach Grade 5 without repeating a grade, while four in ten pupils finally reach Grade 5 after repeating at least one grade.

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FIGURE 12

Average percentage of repeaters in grades 1 to 5 by region, around 1995

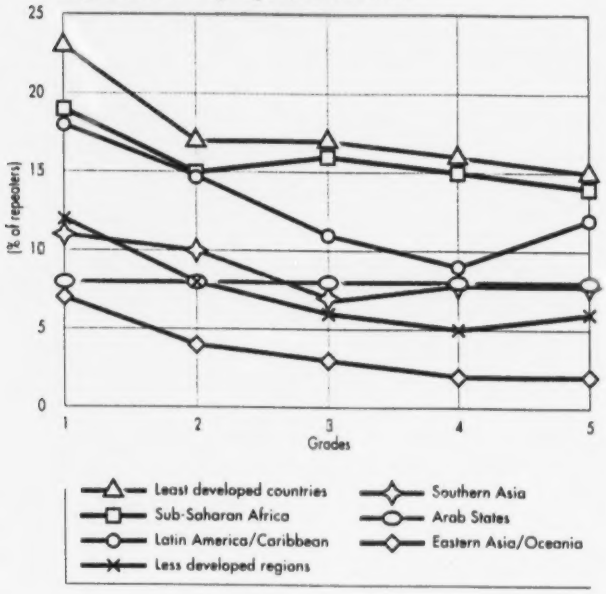


FIGURE 13

Percentage of repeaters in all grades and Grade 1 only, by region, around 1995

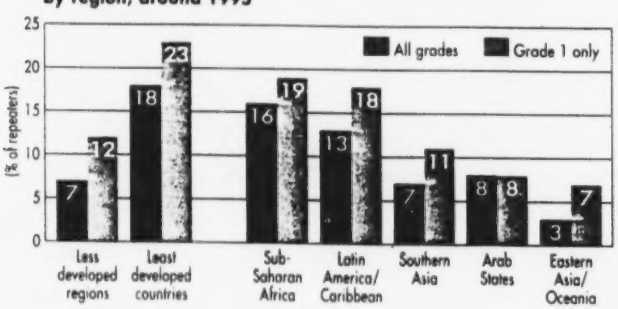
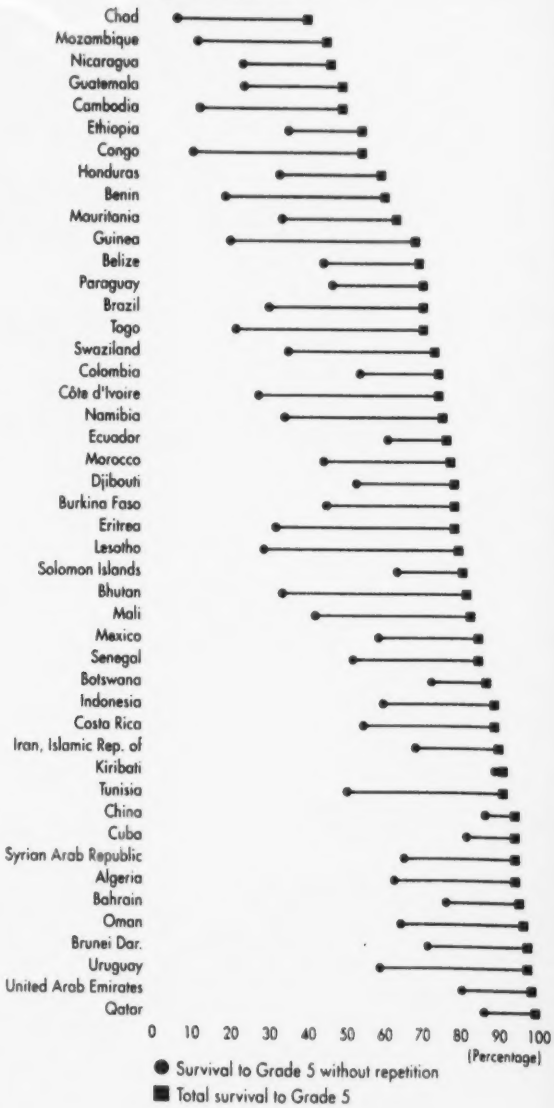


FIGURE 14

Percentage of cohort surviving to Grade 5 in selected countries: total and without grade repetition, 1994-95



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BOX 5. CHILD LABOUR AND WASTAGE

In many developing countries, child labour is a major obstacle both to providing universal access to schooling and to reducing school wastage.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 250 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 are toiling in the workforce of developing countries. About half of these children work full-time, while the rest combine work with schooling or other non-economic activities. However, these estimates do not take into account children who work full-time for their families doing agricultural work or taking care of younger siblings. ILO statistics show that more boys work than girls by a margin of three to two, but the data probably underestimate the unpaid domestic work of girls.

In absolute numbers, Asia accounts for three out of five child workers, whereas Africa accounts for one out of three. Some 7 per cent live in Latin America and less than 1 per cent in Oceania. In relative terms, however, child labour is most common in Africa, where an estimated 41 per cent of children aged 5 to 14 are working, compared with about 21 per cent in Asia, 17 per cent in Latin America and 10 per cent in Oceania. In all regions, the proportion of child workers is much higher in rural areas than in urban centres.

A weight too heavy for him. *(Photo: © Agence Vu, Michel Vanden Eeckhoudt)*

Child labour and absenteeism from school feed on each other. Thus measures to reduce child labour or to improve the coverage and quality of schooling tend to produce benefits in both areas. Many countries are making serious efforts to reduce child labour. The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), established by ILO, offers assistance to countries with explicit national programmes to combat the problem. ILO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recently committed themselves to working together to eliminate child labour and ILO is preparing a draft convention that will strengthen the international legal framework against the problem.

Poverty is generally seen as the most compelling reason for children to work, but researchers have found that poverty need not cause child labour. ' There are many examples of regions of poor countries that have abolished the practice, such as Kerala State in India.

Research has also shown that the 'economic irreplaceability' argument for using child workers also collapses under close scrutiny. ILO has found, for example, that the expected savings on the cost of labour by using children to produce bangles and carpets are surprisingly small, less than 5 and 10 per cent, respectively, of the market price. Such cost savings could easily be compensated for by a small levy on the consumer price.

Laws governing compulsory schooling and the minimum age for employment are interdependent, so enforcing one contributes to enforcement of the other. There are also important long-term benefits from such a two-pronged approach. Educated individuals are more likely to be productive and successful workers, to have higher educational aspirations for their children and to understand that child labour is actually a weight on society.

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Combined effects of drop-out and repetition

Under optimal circumstances, every primary-school pupil would spend one year at each grade level and complete a five-year cycle in five years, or a six-year cycle in six years, and so on. When pupils repeat grades or drop out, however, the average number of 'pupil-years' required to move pupils through the cycle exceeds the prescribed number of years. **Figure 15** shows the average number of pupil-years required for completion of Grade 5 in selected countries around 1995. The numbers range from a low of 5 years in Jordan to a high of 14 years in Chad.

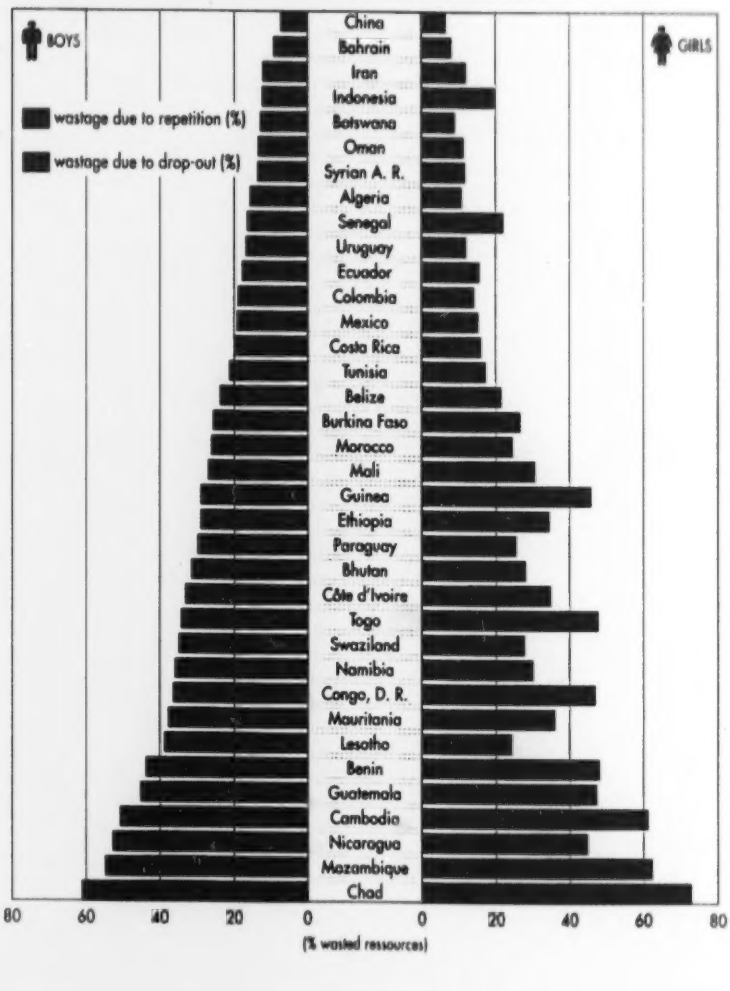
In many countries the proportion of wastage due to drop-out as compared to repetition differs for boys and girls (**Figure 16**). For example, drop-out is a more significant factor for girls than for boys in countries such as Indonesia, Senegal, Guinea and Togo, whereas it is more important factor for boys than for girls in Colombia and Lesotho. ■

FIGURE 15

Average number of years pupils take to complete Grade 5 in selected countries, around 1995

FIGURE 16

Varying proportion of total wastage occuring before Grade 5 due to drop-out and repetition, by gender, in selected countries, around 1995



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There is no alternative for this little potter in Cairo, Egypt, but work. 24 (Photo: © Agence Vu, Denis Dailleux)

Part III

The high cost of wastage

Persistent high rates of wastage impose enormous costs on education systems – and also on the individuals and societies that they serve.

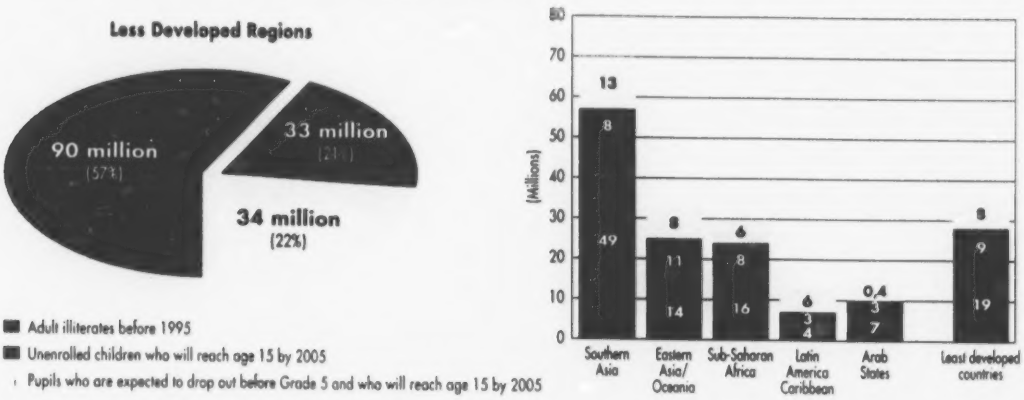
Educational costs

Wastage substantially reduces the capacity of school systems to meet the objectives of education for all. Pupils who require more than one year to complete a grade take up space, teaching time, textbooks and other resources that could be devoted instead to other pupils. In Cambodia, for example, where four out of every ten pupils at any given time are repeaters, the Asian Development Bank estimated that serving these repeaters requires 10,000 additional teachers and 5,000 more classrooms, i.e. 20 per cent of the existing stock. Furthermore when many pupils repeat grades, some classes become abnormally large, making the teaching and learning conditions difficult for everyone.

Wastage has important long-term effects on patterns of adult illiteracy. It is widely recognized that children who drop out of school before acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills frequently relapse into illiteracy. Estimates based on a simulation model (see **Figure 17**) project that 57 per cent of the illiterate adults (aged 15 and over) constituting the target population for literacy instruction in the less developed regions over the period 1995-2005 would comprise the backlog of adults who were illiterate at the beginning of the period. Another 21 per cent would be children reaching age 15 during the period and who had no access to schooling, while 22 per cent more would be children reaching age 15 and dropping out of school before reaching Grade 5.

FIGURE 17

Target groups for literacy in the less developed regions: estimated average number per year between 1995 and 2005. (Adults 15 years and older, in millions)

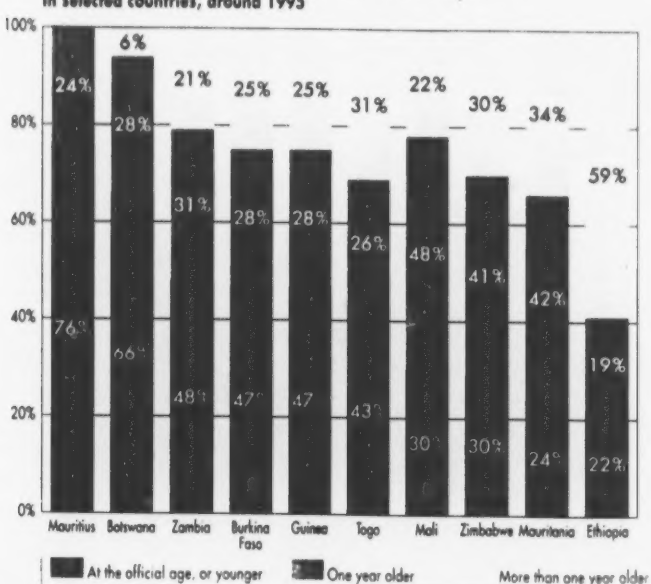


One of the presumed benefits of repetition is to ensure that pupils in each grade have attained more or less the same level of learning and can learn at about the same pace. This assumption is frequently undermined, however, when teachers end up dealing with pupils of varying ages. A recent report on the age of pupils by grade in Latin America shows that Grade 1 teachers had pupils ranging in age from 5 to 8, while a similar study in Kenya revealed an age range in Grade 1 from 2 to 16. In some countries, the age range found in the early grades is due both to repetition and to the practice of admitting children who are younger and older than the official entry age. (Figure 18)

Many teachers and school administrators consider it normal for substantial proportions of pupils to be held back. They take pride in high repetition rates and see them as evidence of their commitment to high standards. Other educators, however, see them as an indictment of the teaching that the retained pupils received. In any case, what some see as a yardstick of academic quality can have pedagogical, social and personal consequences that are quite destructive.

FIGURE 18

Age distribution of children entering Grade 1 for the first time in selected countries, around 1995



Source: *National Education Statistical Information Systems (NESIS)*, Paris UNESCO/DAE 1996

Anecdotal evidence suggests that decisions to hold pupils back are sometimes made on capricious and arbitrary grounds that have little to do with actual pupil performance. Teachers often favour pupils who readily follow rules and give more attention to the brightest pupils at the expense of the others, including pupils who are competent but not outstanding. A study carried out in rural primary schools in Honduras, for example, found that 20 per cent of pupils with sufficient qualifications had not been promoted, while another study in rural Brazil found no significant relation between actual performance and promotion. School systems in many countries lack clear definitions and established procedures for assessing pupil performance and making promotion decisions.

By operating in an elitist fashion and failing to be sensitive to the needs of many ordinary and low-achieving pupils, schools cease to be truly open and accessible to all. They become the property of a minority of highly motivated local elites and thus become alienated from the community as a whole. Schools that limit the prospects for success undermine the motivation of parents to send their children to school.

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In the developing world, one pupil in four drops out before Grade 5. Street children, Madagascar.
(Photo: © Agence Vu, Rip Hopkins)

Financial costs

Maintaining policies that lead to repetition of grades by large numbers of pupils is expensive.

Table 3 presents estimates of the public cost of school wastage by region around 1995. The cost of repetition alone was estimated to total at least US$6 billion for all regions together, with Latin America and the Caribbean region accounting for about half of the total. The cost of total wastage in the first four grades was estimated to absorb some 16 per cent of public current expenditure on education in the less developed regions. These estimates should be viewed as minimal because they do not take into account capital expenditure on education, nor private spending.

Regardless of its pedagogical effects, repeating grades is inefficient because it increases the per pupil cost of schooling without increasing the number of graduates produced. Resources devoted to a repeater are resources that could have been used either to permit another child to enter school or to improve the quality of instruction for pupils already there. From the data presented in **Figure 16**, for instance, it appears that Mozambique's school system is operating at less than half efficiency and Chad's system at about one-third efficiency.

TABLE 3 Estimated public cost of educational wastage by region around 1995

Region	Estimated cost of repetition			Education public current expenditure		
	Total cases of repetition (in thousands)	Cost per pupils US$	Total cost (millions US$)	Total (millions US$)	Spent on wastage before Grade 5 (millions US$)	Spent on wastage before Grade 5 (% of total)
Less developed regions	**42,902**	...	...	...	...	**15.8**
Sub-Saharan Africa	*11,640*	*49*	*570*	*18,800*	*6,167*	*32.8*
Arab States	*2,814*	...	...	*27,500*	*3,460*	*12.6*
Latin America/Caribbean	*10,221*	*312*	*3,189*	*72,800*	*19,393*	*26.6*
Eastern Asia/Oceania	*6,936*	*89*	*617*	*59,900*	*6,139*	*10.2*
Southern Asia	*11,291*	*121*	*1,366*	*18,800*	...	...
(Least developed countries)	*11,220*	*19*	*213*	*5,300*	*2,005*	*37.8*

Economic, social and personal costs

One of the premises of investment in education is that it makes an important and measurable contribution to the economic growth of society, in particular by improving the productivity of labor. A close parallel exists between the rate of economic growth of a country and the overall level of education of its active population. This correlation has been documented both in advanced industrial societies and in developing countries where the agricultural sector remains dominant. Whereas reliance on agriculture has frequently been a force for keeping children out of school, modern agricultural practices require more skilled, albeit fewer, workers.

In view of the importance of the agricultural sector for the economy of most poor countries, it is clear that the persistence of substantial school wastage is contrary to the economic interest of these countries, especially

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since wastage tends to be more pronounced in rural than in urban areas. Although the level of education is not the only factor involved in agricultural production, the failure to enable many rural young people to master basic skills undermines other initiatives to stimulate rural development.

Children who drop out of school before acquiring sustainable reading and writing skills frequently relapse into illiteracy. Thus dropping out undermines efforts to reduce adult illiteracy – like trying to drain a sink that is being filled at the same time by the tap. Children and adolescents out of school in urban areas are also more vulnerable to the attractions of street life and organized gangs of children, which contributes to problems of delinquency and crime. Furthermore, school wastage promotes a 'culture of failure'. As said earlier (see Box 4), pupils who are unable to proceed with their classmates to the next grade frequently face problems of self-esteem and are likely to develop negative attitudes toward schooling. Repeaters thus become likely candidates for dropping out entirely.

Children's success in school is generally believed to be primarily a function of their innate intellectual aptitudes. Yet, in the case of pupils who come from deprived home environments, their living conditions may considerably reduce their motivation and opportunities to learn, whatever their intellectual ability may be. Also, the language of instruction may put certain children at a distinct disadvantage (see Box 6). By disregarding these conditions and attributing poor academic performance to the assumed 'inability' of the child, the school merely reinforces discriminatory social conditions. ■

Learning begins at home.

(Photo: © UNICEF Hanoi/Kunugi)

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BOX 6. SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

'Schooling that cuts the young child off from the home language is a major cause of drop-out and repetition,' argues Joseph Poth of UNESCO's LINGUAPAX project. 'The language spoken in the family is best for the child's early learning. This fact must prevail over political and ideological considerations.' LINGUAPAX was established in 1986 to promote multi-lingual education and the respect of linguistic diversity. It eluborates guidelines for language policies in education, develops appropriate teaching materials for multilingual education and produces practical guides for use in training institutes.

Multilingual societies outnumber monolingual societies in the world and respecting linguistic diversity is no easy task. For example, there are some 1,200 recognized languages in India, using various systems of writing. In Papua New Guinea, there are roughly 600 local languages. Some 400 languages are spoken in Latin America, while Africa counts over 2,000.

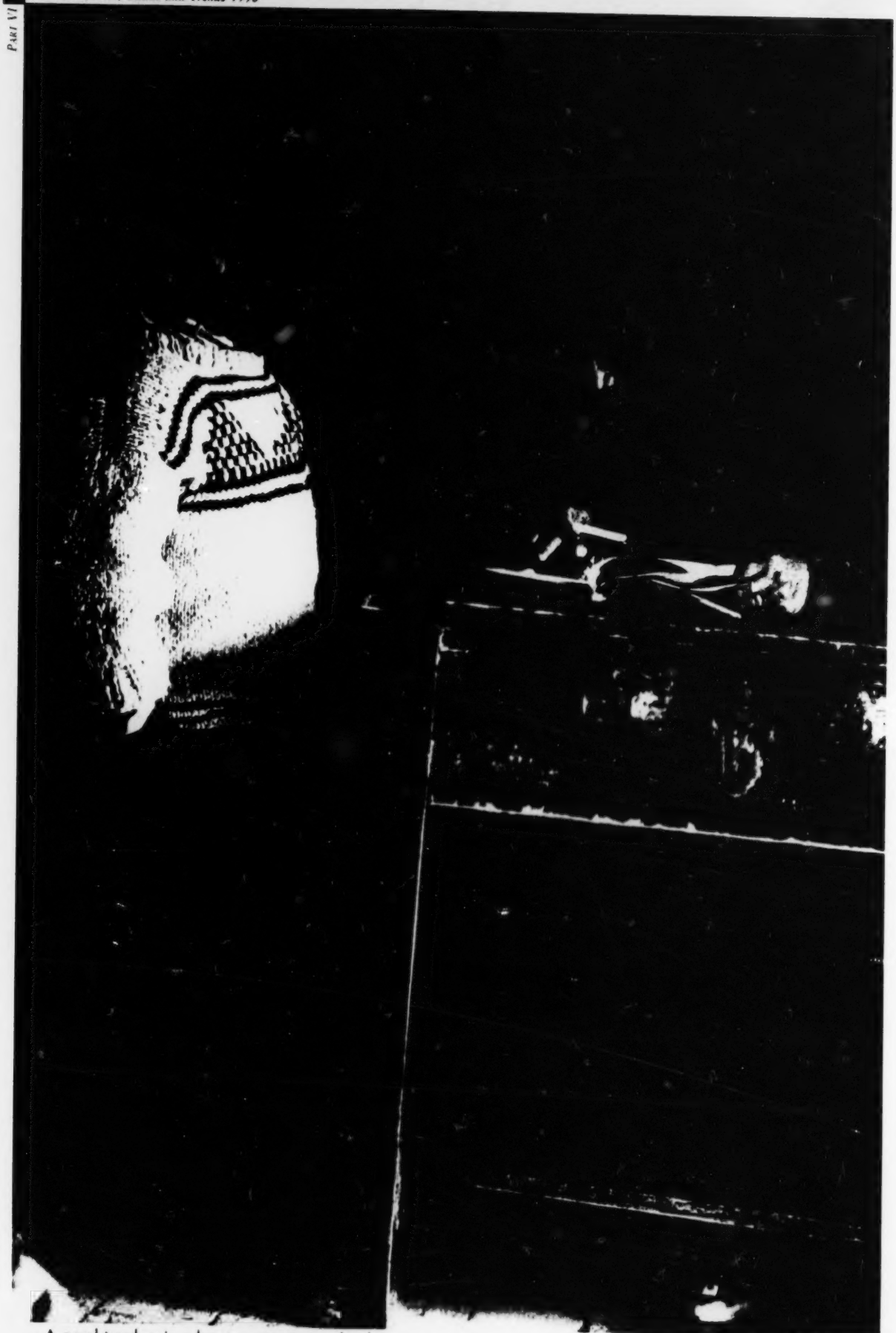
UNESCO's report on the use of vernacular languages in education (1953) asserts the right of all children to be educated in their native tongue. But the practical difficulties of implementing that right are challenging and the question whether there can be a single 'language right' for all situations is a source of controversy. Governments in multilingual societies decide which languages are official – used by government, the media and the schools. This decision is often motivated by the political and social need to promote a lingua franca.

The choice of the language of instruction is important to students in several ways, since it can offer, or obstruct, access to a language of wide communication, which in turn can facilitate their access to information, humanity's cultural heritage, and job opportunities.

However, there is broad agreement among linguistic experts that pupils should learn to read in their native language and then transfer their reading skills to a second language. Several assessments of bilingual education programmes show that this approach contributes to better learning and reduces dropout and repetition. A landmark six-year primary education project using the Yoruba language in Nigeria found that "groups in the experimental classes obtained better results across the board... than the control groups." Similarly, the Institute of Educational Reform in Burkina Faso found that "expulsions and dropouts were practically nil... children were quick on the uptake" in experimental classes using local languages.

In Guatemala, where a national bilingual education programme was established in 1979 with support from USAID and the World Bank, the national curriculum was adapted and translated into four Mayan languages. Compared with a control group of Mayan children who were taught only in Spanish, the bilingual programme students had lower failure, repetition and dropout rates. They scored higher in comprehension and in all subjects, including Spanish, and their promotion rate was nine per cent higher. Parental support for the bilingual programme also led to an increased demand for education.

In multilingual contexts, the choice of what language to use in school should not be a question of "either/or" but "both." Instruction in the mother tongue in the early grades followed by use of the official language, if different from the mother tongue, is now widely viewed as the most effective approach.



A good teacher is a key to success at school.

(Photo: © Agence Métis, Pascal Dolemieux)

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Part IV

What can be done about school wastage?

The causes of school wastage are multiple, but fall into two general categories: those that are rooted in the overall social and economic environment and those that stem from the way the school system itself is organized and operates. Social and economic forces are largely beyond the control of educators but may be influenced by public policies in areas such as transport, health services and labour laws. However, certain factors contributing to school wastage can be readily addressed by education officials.

Policies related to social and economic conditions

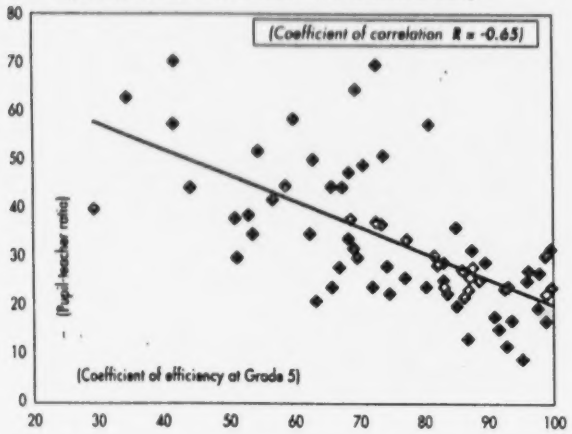
Data from UNESCO and other sources show that drop-out rates are highly sensitive to the national economic context. Studies in certain less developed countries, for example, have shown a significant and positive correlation between drop-out rates and the percentage of people living below the poverty line, i.e. on less than $1 a day (see **figure 19**, panel C).

Figure 19 shows that school wastage correlates also with several educational, social and demographic variables. For instance, as access to health services increases, so does the survival rate to Grade 5. As one would expect, children do better in school when they are healthy.

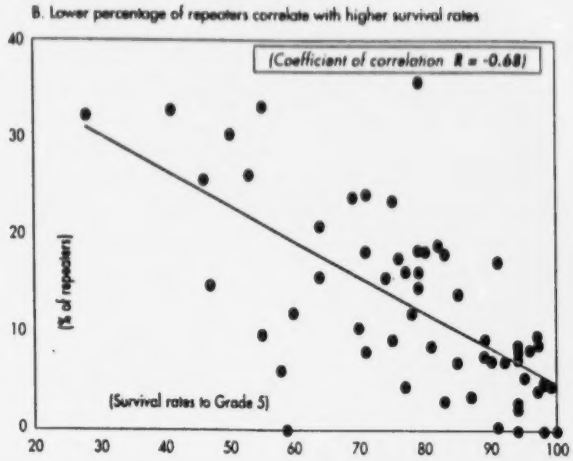
FIGURE 19

Factors associated with internal efficiency of primary schooling in the less developed regions, around 1995

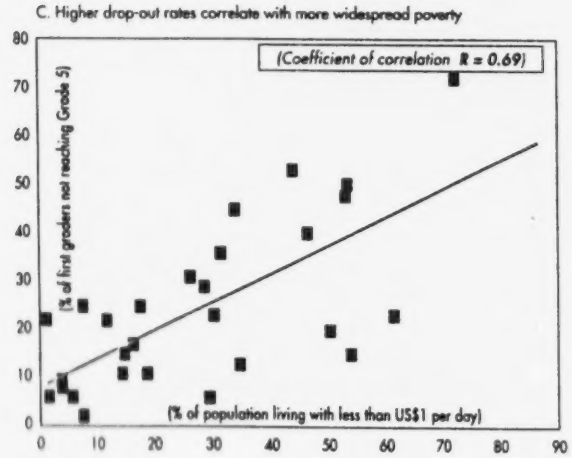
A. Higher pupil-teacher ratios correlate with lower school efficiency



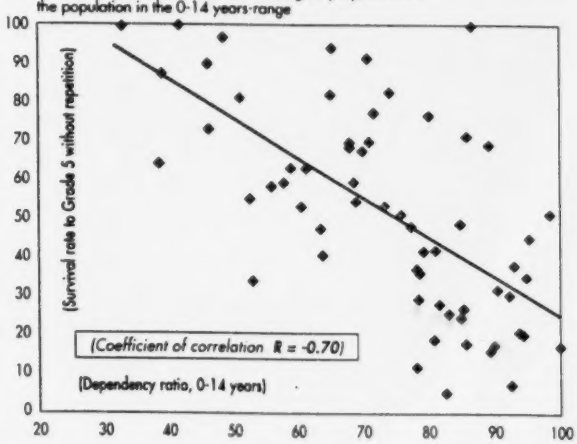
B. Lower percentage of repeaters correlate with higher survival rates



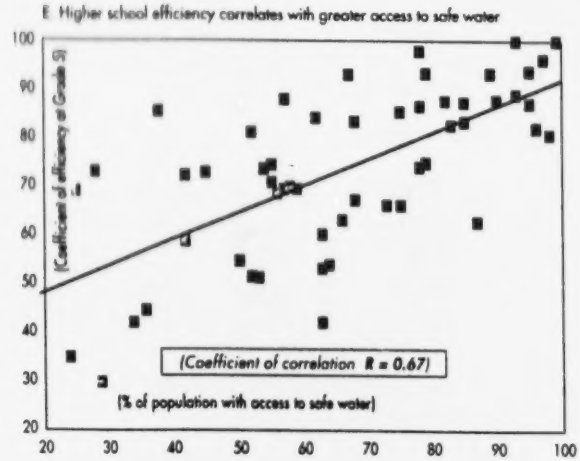
C. Higher drop-out rates correlate with more widespread poverty



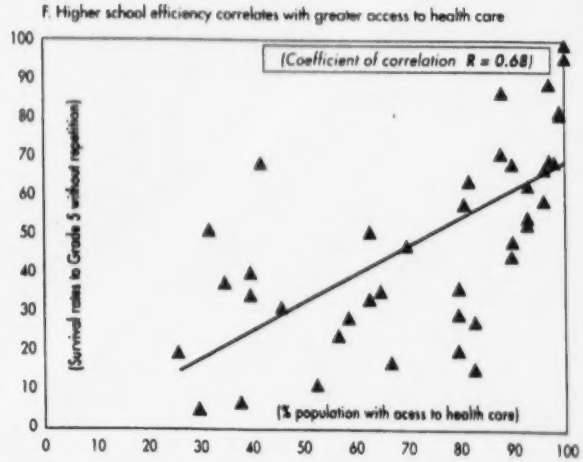
D. Lower survival rates correlate with higher proportions of the population in the 0-14 years-range



E. Higher school efficiency correlates with greater access to safe water



F. Higher school efficiency correlates with greater access to health care



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Countries with similar social indices sometimes report quite different patterns of repetition, while countries at quite different levels of development tend to have dissimilar levels of drop-out. It appears that drop-out rates are closely linked to the general state of a society – its level of economic and cultural development, how social services are distributed and attitudes toward education – while the repetition rates are largely determined by school policies.

Lowering the costs of schooling

Even when public schools are ostensibly free, parents must bear various direct costs to educate their children. Often, they must purchase school supplies and textbooks. While school uniforms may be a source of pride for pupils and their families, they can represent a major cost for parents with limited means. Developing countries frequently impose de facto tuition charges in the form of fees for registration, examinations and other services. In many cases these 'user fees' total many times the amount the government's expenditure per pupil.

Public policy-makers can reduce these direct costs that families must bear to enrol their children in school through means such as subsidizing textbooks and transportation, providing essential school supplies and waiving school fees for pupils from very poor families.

Recently, for example, in response to the economic crisis, Indonesia obtained a rescue programme from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank to help keep some 25 million Indonesian pupils in school over the next five years.

Families also face indirect costs, primarily in the form of labour that the child would otherwise be performing if not enrolled in school. Thus, pupils in school cannot be taking care of younger siblings in the home or selling goods in the market or looking after farm animals or working in the fields. A study of school wastage conducted in twenty-four schools in the eleven counties of the State of Bahia in Brazil showed that the primary cause of school-drop-out was the need for the child to work to help support the family. A report prepared for the Egyptian Ministry of Education in 1993 estimated that more than 1.5 million children under the age of 15 formed part of the working population.

Both the direct and indirect costs of schooling are particularly important in the case of girls. When poor families conclude that they can afford to educate only some of their children, they tend to favour sons over daughters in the belief that it is more important for boys to be equipped to enter the job market. In some countries, it is common for the eldest daughter to drop out of school as soon as there are younger brothers and sisters for her to look after and she is unlikely to return to school even if the younger siblings, both male and female, enter school.

Improving access to schooling

Lack of proximity to schools is an important cause of wastage, especially for younger children in rural areas who need a school close to their homes. Some countries are overcoming this obstacle by setting up community schools or 'branch' or 'feeder' schools connected to established schools. Even though these small schools often can offer only the first few primary grades, they can have a positive impact on access, especially for girls. A UNESCO survey in 1991 showed that the proportion of incomplete schools in rural areas was over 30 per cent in nearly half of the countries of sub-Saharan Africa and in one-third of the Arab States and countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region.

However, the pupils who enter these incomplete schools often find it difficult to continue their schooling at a more distant location. If there is no provision of school transport or midday meals, only the most motivated families will continue sending their children to school away from the local community. A few countries, such as Bhutan, Malaysia and Thailand, are overcoming this difficulty by providing limited boarding facilities for pupils who live great distances from school, but this solution is more often used for post-primary levels of education.

Another approach to expanding access, used in the Philippines and Thailand, for example, is to employ 'mobile teachers' who travel by horseback or other means to reach pupils in remote areas. Yet another approach that is used in thinly populated areas is to permit teachers to teach several grades simultaneously – multigrade instruction. To be effective, this approach requires ample availability of teaching materials, since pupils must spend a good part of the school day working on their own or in small groups while the teacher is working with pupils in other 'grades'.

The provision of adequate classrooms and teachers in accessible schools is an important condition for universal primary education, but other, complementary measures have proved necessary to ensure that all children actually attend school. Parents need to be encouraged and convinced to send their children to school and compulsory education laws need to be enforced. Child labour laws that are in conformity with international standards and that are rigorously enforced tend to ensure that children are not kept out of school.

BOX 7. FOOD FOR THOUGHT

When some primary schools in the Ethiopian regions of Amhara and Tigray started to distribute food to their pupils in a project sponsored by the World Food Programme (WFP) enrolments increased by over 50 per cent between 1994 and 1995. Drop-out and attendance rates, along with performance in the end-of-year examinations, improved as well. And most of the new pupils had never been to school before.

The positive effects of school feeding programmes have been demonstrated in many other countries, too. In Morocco, for example, children were more likely to enrol and remain in schools with a canteen. A school feeding programme in Burkina Faso resulted in increased enrolments and less absenteeism and drop-out, as well as improvements in repetition and examination pass rates. In Benin, the existence of a school canteen was associated with higher learning achievement. By contrast, one-fourth of the pupils dropped out of school when a school feeding programme was interrupted in the Dominican Republic.

In poor communities, where the direct and indirect costs and poor quality of education lead parents to keep their children out of school, the distribution of school meals can be a strong incentive for children to enrol and attend regularly. Since absenteeism often leads to drop-out, encouraging regular attendance tends to prevent drop-out. Pupils who have attended school throughout the year are also more likely to succeed in examinations.

School feeding programmes are also often an effective way to involve parents in school affairs and improve school-community relations. For example, parent-teacher associations help run the school canteens in Côte d'Ivoire that receive food aid from WFP. When parents are motivated and involved in school life, the education of their children benefits.

The positive effects of school feeding on education can be enhanced even further if it is combined with other health and nutrition interventions for school children, such as de-worming and micro-nutrient supplementation.

Even well-nourished children have concentration problems when they are hungry. One study in Canada showed that low-achieving children ate breakfast less regularly than did high-achieving children from similar backgrounds. Short-term hunger has even more detrimental effects in undernourished children, especially if they walk long distances to school.

School feeding programmes, whether sponsored by food aid organizations or functioning with local resources, exist in most countries. When they are well organized, they can make an important contribution to reducing educational wastage.

Milk-corn-soya-lunch under a tree in Botswana.

(Photo: © Christopher Barry)

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Changing educational policies and practices

Common sense suggests – and numerous studies have confirmed – that children are far more likely to be motivated to learn and to persist in school if the curricula and teaching methods are of high quality. By contrast, pupils who are bored and fail to see the connection between their personal lives and what they are taught in school become candidates for academic failure and, eventually, dropping out.

There is much that can and must be done to improve the quality of instruction through a concerted strategy to improve the curricula, the training of teachers and the reorganization of the school to promote learning. The involvement and leadership of the school head can make or break any attempt at reform, as the experience of Chile's 900 Schools Programme shows. There, school directors and programme supervisors devise an annual improvement plan to examine their needs, raise their standards and, in co-operation with teachers, evaluate their work.

Improving teaching methods

Numerous studies have established that skilled teaching has a strong positive impact on pupil achievement. For example, a recent study in rural Pakistan found that investments that improve teacher quality and increase student exposure to teachers are likely to have higher returns in schooling effectiveness than those that improve physical infrastructure and equipment. Another recent large-scale research project in the United States found that the wide disparities in achievement between black and white pupils attending different schools were almost entirely accounted for by the qualifications of teachers.

But improving the quality of teacher training requires more than imparting new pedagogical techniques. Several surveys have shown that many teachers do not feel responsible in any way for their pupils' failures. Instead, they believe that learning abilities are innate, so they tend to ascribe failure primarily to a pupil's low intelligence, lack of work or family background. These teachers regard their task as merely transmitting knowledge, rather than guiding pupils through a learning process.

Such attitudes among teachers are often intensified by poor working conditions and the lack of any professional framework through which they could exchange experiences and learn from their peers. Also, teacher morale and salaries are low in many countries, which does not encourage them to seek to improve their skills.

Any systematic effort to reduce school wastage should include measures to enhance the skills and working conditions of classroom teachers, especially those who teach in the early grades where repetition is greatest. Both pre-service and in-service teacher training should aim to equip teachers with a variety of practical strategies for helping pupils learn in a timely fashion. Teachers need to master pupil-centred approaches that recognize that each pupil has specific learning needs and requires a particular set of interventions. Various strategies can be employed to upgrade teachers' skills and attitudes and their capacities to introduce new curricular materials and teaching methods.

Making schools more flexible

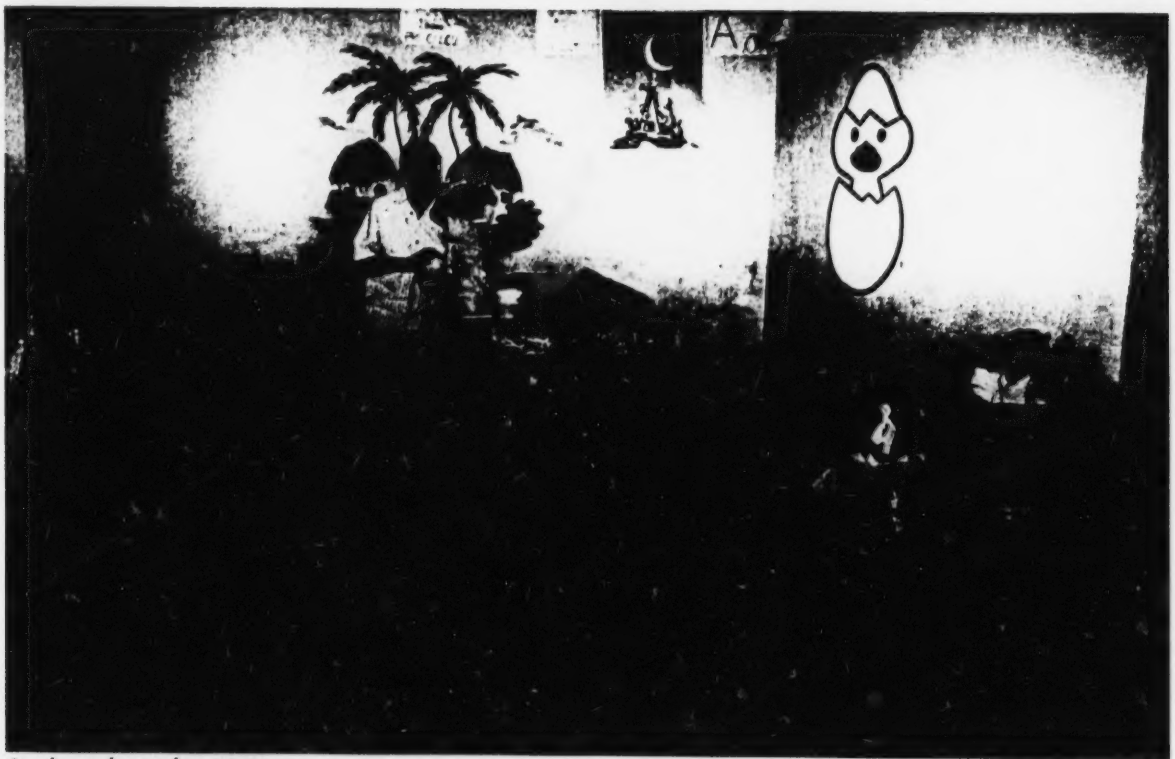
A number of countries, such as the Philippines, have found that school attendance can be improved and wastage reduced by organizing school calendars so that pupils in rural areas are not expected to attend school during planting and harvest seasons when their families need their labour. Similarly, the hours of the school day can be set to take account of the fact that some pupils, especially girls, must perform household chores.

Classes that include pupils of different ages have been found, under certain conditions, to be an effective way of dealing with the fact that pupils develop at different paces, especially during the primary school years. When teachers have been trained to manage such classes and to take advantage of the instructional possibilities inherent in such diversity, they often find that retention becomes unnecessary.

Early intervention

A considerable body of literature demonstrates the advantages of "front-loading" educational services to make sure that pupils get off to a good start in their schooling and build a strong base for future learning. A study in Madagascar, for instance, found strong correlations between pre-school education and lowered school wastage rates. A study in Mexico estimated that pre-school education produced a 19 per cent improvement in performance on mathematics tests among the children of poor families.

In most developing countries, however, early childhood education is still considered to be a luxury and most



On the right track in Haiti.

(Photo: © Agence Vu, Lam Duc)

such programmes are located in urban areas only. They are often considered by the personnel and the parents as a downward extension of schooling. Consequently, the personnel are not always sensitive to the developmental needs of pre-school children and force them prematurely into routine reading and writing.

Well-designed early childhood development programmes have proved to be effective in helping pupils from poor families to acquire some of the cultural attitudes and school-readiness skills that children from more affluent families learn in their homes. It is important, however, that such programmes be carried out by competent personnel with special training. Instructional methods should aim to awaken children's interest in learning rather than to push them to early acquisition of formal academic skills.

The high rate of repetition in Grade 1 suggests how important it is for pupils to get off to a good start in their schooling. The selection, competence and behaviour of teachers responsible for the entry grade should be a priority in efforts to combat wastage. School administrators would do well to assign the best teachers to work with the beginning pupils.

A number of countries have found ways to put more resources, including teaching time, into the early grades. One approach is to provide remedial measures for chronic repeaters. Brazil's State of Saõ Paolo, for example, has developed an anti-wastage strategy that consists of creating accelerated classes for repeaters at two levels (Grades 1 and 2 and Grades 3 and 4) with the aim of rapid promotion to the higher level. Intensive study in small groups and a belief in the pupils' innate possibilities are the hallmarks of this strategy, which targets the counties and schools with the biggest age-range per grade.

Inclusive education

An estimated 10 per cent of all pupils have significant difficulties in learning at school. Children's disabilities and other learning difficulties may result from a number of factors: those within the child but also environmental factors such as poverty or lack of stimulation and school-related factors such as lack of good instructional materials, and inappropriate teaching and assessment standards. The very concept of 'special needs' has thus widened to include all children who are failing to benefit from school for whatever reasons. Special education is no longer a marginal issue and is now more commonly referred to as inclusive education or the 'one school for all' approach.

School teachers need to be prepared for this shift in approach through pre-service and in-service training. Certain prevalent attitudes towards disabilities also need to be reassessed so that

schools can meet the learning needs of all the children in a community together.

Making educational materials more available

Teaching aids, including textbooks, are scarce in many schools in developing countries. Faced with inadequate budgets that must cover teachers' salaries first, many ministries of education have little funding left to spend on textbooks and supplies. Yet numerous studies have demonstrated that the availability of textbooks is one of the major contributors to effective learning.

A 1997 UNESCO study on sustainable book provision points out that only a handful of industrialized nations possess both the technology of publishing and the knowledge and research to sustain a publishing industry. With few exceptions, developing countries, are poorly equipped to produce good quality learning materials. Consequently, they continue to import textbooks, but often in too small quantities, which is a costly way to alleviate some of the symptoms, rather than deal with the source of the problem – the absence of a publishing industry of their own. Even when educators in these countries develop suitable educational materials, they often do so with little awareness of the professional skills needed to publish and distribute books at a reasonable cost.

The promotion of national publishing industries is a promising strategy to enable countries to produce and disseminate suitable learning materials for their schools, as well as to more towards the wider goal of education for all, by creating and supporting a culture of reading.

Closing the gender gap

Last but not least, attaining the goal of Education for All requires overcoming the gender gap in primary schooling that characterizes most developing countries. To do so, it is necessary to understand the causes of the gap.

BOX 8. STARTING EARLY IN THE CARIBBEAN

'We are Servol, and we care' says a charter written by the staff. Born in the aftermath of a social explosion in 1970, Servol (Service Volunteered for All) defined its programmes by listening to the marginalized and disadvantaged people in the slums of Laventille, Trinidad and Tobago. The outcome was two successful community-based programmes: early childhood centres for 2-5 year-olds and skills-training centres for teenage drop-outs. 'Each centre has to be run by the local community,' says executive director Sister Ruth Montrichard, who describes Servol's work as 'respectful intervention in the lives of others.'

The 4,500 pre-school children who pass through Servol's 148 early childhood centres each year are well prepared for the demands of primary school. Teachers help children develop physically, intellectually, creatively, emotionally and spiritually rather than pressure them into reading and writing and counting at an early age. The curriculum is geared to learning about the Caribbean heritage: children make masks, costumes and instruments for Carnival, and they colour flags on Independence Day. The children are introduced to art, drama, music and dance. Intellectual activities involve concepts of time, space, language, colours and pre-writing skills. Programme evaluations in 1990 and 1995 noted that pupils entering primary school from Servol pre-schools tended to be more sociable, speak up in class and generally communicate more than the other children, even those who attended other pre-schools.

Servol's pre-school teacher training course is recognized by Oxford University. Candidates selected from 15 Caribbean territories spend one year full-time in the Port-of-Spain training centre and a one-year internship in the field, during which they are regularly monitored. Besides administering its 188 centres in Trinidad and Tobago, Servol monitors a similar number in 15 other Caribbean territories.

Recognizing that parents are the primary care-givers, Servol also trains para-professionals to go from village to village educating parents. They explain how harsh discipline or neglect stunts a child's potential. The child's emotional needs, nutrition, hygiene and environmental issues are also addressed. Teenage parents have been particularly responsive. The pre-school teachers have noted that increased parental awareness produces results such as improved cleanliness, punctuality and attendance among the children and more nutritious food and fewer sweets in their lunch-boxes.

The world children have to face is tough and competitive. To survive, according to Servol, children must have a well-developed personality. Its pre-schools help young children to develop a positive self-image, to be resourceful and curious about learning, and to be responsible and caring towards the world around them. Servol believes that empowerment at the grassroots is the most effective tool for building a nation and it has convincingly demonstrated through its programmes that the vicious cycle of poverty, violence and despair can be broken.

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BOX 9. THE PARENT FACTOR

In a survey conducted in China, primary school drop-outs were asked: 'Under what circumstances would you not have dropped out of school?' Nearly one out of three responded: 'If my parents had given more support, I would not have dropped out.' The same survey revealed that nearly half (47.1 per cent) of the primary-school drop-outs left school at the decision of their parents.

Governments in many countries, including China, have used massive publicity campaigns to increase public awareness of the economic and other benefits of education and to convince parents to enrol and keep their children in school. Such campaigns have been particularly successful in raising enrolment and survival rates among girls. Campaigns make use of radio, television and videos as well as low tech means such as posters and street theatre. They are most effective when they have the support of political, religious and other leaders in the country and when they are carried out in partnership with women's groups and civic organizations.

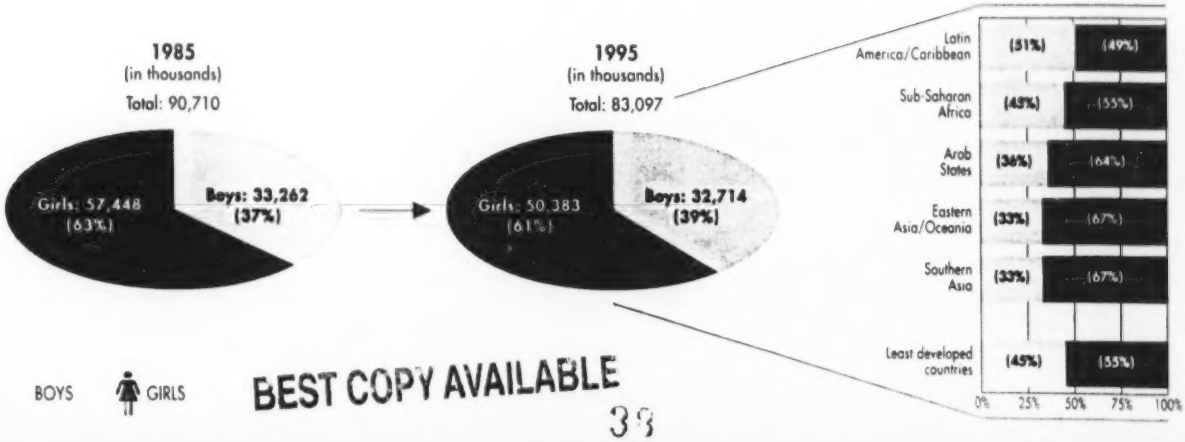
Such information campaigns generally encourage parents to enrol their children promptly when they reach the entry age of compulsory schooling. This not only benefits the children but makes the teachers' work easier because they can deal with a narrower age range among their pupils. Some campaigns seek also to sensitize policy-makers to the causes of school wastage and its harmful effects, and then to build their commitment to adopt solutions.

The impact of parents' education on the schooling of children is well documented. In many countries, the educational level of parents is the single best predictor of how long children will stay in school and how well they will perform scholastically. Programmes that promote literacy among parents are thus likely to have positive educational effects on their children as well. Such programmes often target recent school drop-outs, female heads of households and young women in the 16 to 25 age-group, who are most likely to have young children.

Parents may have their hands full, but they must send their children to school.
(Photo: ©UNESCO/T. Onan)

FIGURE 20

Out-of-school primary-school-age children in the less developed regions, by gender, 1985 and 1995 (in thousands)



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Most societies make a clear distinction between men's roles and women's roles, and the latter often lie outside the mainstream of economic activities. One result, especially in rural communities, is that the education of girls is considered less important than the education of boys. Where the practice of child marriage continues, girls are withdrawn from school at puberty or are never enrolled. A study in Sierra Leone on the impact of the economic crisis on girls' education showed that parents chose to cut costs by withdrawing daughters before sons from the school.

With few exceptions, boys tend to be enrolled in school at significantly higher rates than girls in all developing regions and they then complete the primary-school cycle in larger numbers, see **Figure 20**. However, a closer look at the data shows that once girls are admitted to school, their drop-out rate is no higher than that for boys. This suggests that strategies to remove the gender gap should concentrate on getting more girls into school in the first place.

Various measures have proved effective in increasing girls' enrolment, such as waiving or reducing school fees for girls, supplying free textbooks, providing stipends for girls, offering flexible school hours and establishing childcare centres for the young siblings of girl pupils. To encourage the enrolment of girls, programmes in Pakistan and Niger give girl pupils a take-home food ration. Such incentives tend to encourage regular attendance and reduce drop-out. In some cultures, the location of schools and their physical facilities influence girls' access to education. Building schools close to girls' homes, providing separate sanitary facilities and constructing boundary walls can encourage parents to send their daughters to school.

Some countries have found that girls' enrolment and performance improve if they can attend single-sex schools. Bangladesh, Chad, India, Pakistan, Senegal and Yemen have made special efforts to build new classrooms for girls. (See also Box 10, Girl-friendly schools in Egypt.) Similarly, in some rural areas and traditional communities, girls' enrolment tends to increase when there are women teachers in the school.

In the long term, education itself can help close the gender gap. Curricula that convey positive images of girls and women contribute to removing gender biases and harmful attitudes towards women. Educated women are better equipped to exercise their rights and educated men are more considerate and ready to regard women as equals. Enlightened public policy can hasten reaching a critical mass of educated men and women who truly understand the importance of educating their sons . . . and daughters.

Retention versus automatic promotion

Whereas drop-out rates are often affected by social and economic forces beyond the control of educators, decisions on whether or not to promote pupils to the next grade are generally made by teachers. Repetition rates are thus a matter of educational policy and practice.

Unfortunately, decisions on repetition are sometimes taken for reasons that have little to do with the presumed educational benefits. A study on school wastage in Bahia, Brazil, found that such decisions are often made by teachers in a haphazard and discriminatory manner. Considerations such as dress codes, speech and social status frequently entered the picture. In other cases, retention – and even expulsion – were used to punish pupils considered to be inattentive, or insufficiently motivated or otherwise unco-operative.

In formulating promotion policies, school authorities would be well advised to survey the research literature first. A significant body of research indicates that the negative

The living textbook.
(Photo: © UNICEF, Rita Somazzi)

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BOX 10. GIRL-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS IN EGYPT

We wish all girls, women and men in our village could get an education, but we cannot afford it, nor can we allow girls to walk long distances on their own.

An elderly man in rural Egypt

In Egypt, some 4.2 million children don't go to school, and their ranks grow yearly by some 350,000 more who reach school age but fail to enrol or who drop out. Among adults, only about a third of Egyptian women are literate, compared to about two-thirds of Egyptian men. This disparity is even more marked in rural areas, notably in Upper Egypt.

While over half the boys from isolated hamlets walk to the nearest government primary school, most of the girls do not because of their parents' fears or because of the hidden costs of 'free' primary education. Poor families who cannot afford to educate all of their children tend to favour the sons, so that in many hamlets, not even 15 per cent of the girls go to school.

The Community School Project began when the Ministry of Education, realizing that innovative measures were needed to provide universal primary schooling by the year 2000, asked UNICEF to design a pilot school project that would use non-conventional means to remove the regional and gender disparities marring Egypt's report card. The involvement of the communities themselves was a priority consideration for the project's developers. While scouting for sites, they found a strong desire for girls' education, so long as it was provided in the community.

The first four schools in a rural district were an immediate success. In what became standard procedure, the local families supplied a schoolroom close to their homes and formed a committee to manage the school and ensure regular attendance. Schooling was completely free, with no costs for uniforms or books.

Eliminating the long walk to school is a crucial girl-friendly feature. So is recruiting young local women to be trained as 'facilitators' (para-professional teachers) who organize activities, provide materials and stimulate children's learning, rather than 'delivering knowledge'.

By the end of 1997, the project was so successful that 151 community schools were operating in some of the most conservative areas of Egypt, with girls making up 70 per cent of the pupils. The plan is to have 50 more schools in operation by 1999.

The schools are inviting, lively places decorated with the pupils' artwork. A child-centred approach is used, with songs, games and stories relating to the children's daily lives. The facilitators and children collect and use odds and ends from bottle caps to toothbrushes as teaching and learning aids. Although the daily timetable allows children to carry out their agricultural or domestic chores at home, the syllabus provides the equivalent of a full primary school programme, covering Arabic, religious studies, arithmetic, local history, science and art. Children also acquire life skills such as problem-solving and civic behaviour, and learn about health and the environment.

The community provides the school premises and the Ministry of Education finances the facilitators' salaries, training and books. UNICEF trains the facilitators, furnishes the classrooms and supports local organizations that implement the project.

The community schools have acted as a catalyst for other development activities. In 1995, about 1,600 women attended literacy classes in the schools. Health posts, water and sanitation supplies, and income-generating activities have grown up around them. Their success has not escaped the attention of Egypt's decision-makers: the Ministry of Education has announced its intention to open some 3,000 one-classroom schools in rural areas, similar to the community schools, and under the patronage of First Lady Mrs Mubarak.

One of the lucky few.

(Photo: ©UNICEF Egypt)

They are well equipped to get ahead. *(Photo: © Christopher Barry)*

effects of repetition largely outstrip the expected benefits. One study by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, for example, found no absolute relation between retention policies and overall pupil achievement. It noted that pupils in the Scandinavian countries and Japan, which have done away with grade repetition, typically perform well above the international average on comparative examinations.

However, it should also be noted that several countries that at one time or another had policies of automatic promotion later abandoned them. Panama and Puerto Rico decided to do away with automatic promotion when they discovered that too many pupils were leaving school lacking sufficient skills. Moreover, opposition to automatic promotion is strong among members of the teaching profession who, like most people, are reluctant to give up practices that have been followed for many years. This opposition is sometimes reinforced by broken promises of additional resources for remedial measures to help pupils promoted automatically despite their scholastic under-achievement.

Moreover, evaluation of pupils' achievement should be continuous, with the aim of detecting and compensating learning difficulties rather than selecting pupils for promotion. In Malaysia, for example, where automatic promotion is practised in the nine grades of primary and lower secondary education, each school assesses the achievement of its own pupils. There is also a national test each year for pupils in Grades 3 and 5, the results of which help teachers to make a better evaluation of their pupils' achievement and to compare it with the performance of pupils in other schools.

Some countries have taken a compromise position and permit repeating only at certain strategic points in a child's education. For example, Botswana allows repetition only for Grade 4 pupils who do not score sufficiently high on an achievement test and for Grade 7 pupils who do not gain admission to secondary school.

It is important to recognize that neither automatic promotion nor retention policies, by themselves, can solve the problems of children who experience difficulty in learning. Pupils who move on to the next grade without having mastered material at the previous level are likely to have trouble learning the new subject matter, too. Pupils who fail to grasp material presented in a particular manner and setting are not likely to have much more success by going through an identical experience a second time. In both cases, the more effective approach would be to provide specific teaching interventions that address the particular learning needs of each pupil. ■

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Conclusion

There is no universal set of solutions to the problems of school wastage. Educators and policy-makers need first to identify the predominant causes of drop-out and repetition in their particular situation and then devise appropriate solutions, which may need to target particular grades, geographical areas, communities, and disadvantaged groups. Such decisions will be more soundly based when a suitable data collection system is in place, which can then provide feedback once the corrective measures are under way.

Any attempt to reduce school wastage must be comprehensive and systematic in order to deal with its multiple causes. Some aspects of wastage, notably high repetition rates, can be addressed through changes in educational practice that are largely under the control of educational policy-makers. Other components, such as dropping out, are rooted mainly in economic and social conditions external to the school. Addressing them requires working with members of local communities as well as with political and other leaders. It is thus incumbent upon teachers and school administrators to make their fellow citizens aware of the cost to families and to society when children are excluded from school or fail in school.

A review of the research on grade repetition provides no conclusive evidence to support the hypothesis that repetition is a more effective way of helping low achievers than automatic promotion. As repeaters use resources that could otherwise be used to expand enrolment or to improve the quality of educational services, countries with high levels of repetition should review their promotion policies with a view to adopting more efficient measures to improve learning achievement and prevent failure. The elimination of drop-out and repetition, however, would not necessarily solve the problem of under-achievement. Pupil-centred instruction and various other pedagogical improvements can raise the learning achievement of all pupils and thereby increase the efficiency of primary education. ■

Annexe 1

Introduction to the statistical tables

The tables in this appendix are based largely on data reported to UNESCO's Division of Statistics and to other international agencies. While these data are the best available at international level, they must be interpreted with care and should be regarded as indications of magnitude rather than as precise measurements. For one thing, complete and pertinent statistics for assessing wastage in education are not readily available for many countries, including some with large school-age populations. Even the available statistics frequently understate school wastage in poor and rural areas, and sometimes do not reflect the substantial numbers of pupils who change schools. Furthermore, statistics based on household surveys or census data often produce a very different picture than do those based on school statistics. It should also be noted that some of the data shown for 1995 or LYA (latest year available) actually refer to the period around 1995, i.e. 1992 to 1996.

Countries may also use varying definitions and methodologies in collecting, classifying and interpreting data. For example, some countries count pupils as drop-outs if they complete the primary cycle but fail to pass the national examination given at that point. A pupil who stops attending school before the end of the academic year and then re-enrols in the same grade the following year may be classified as a drop-out in some countries but as a repeater in others. Such distinctions are important because they give very different pictures of how schools are functioning and what kind of remedial measures may be needed.

For these reasons, and in view of the important differences between school systems even in neighbouring countries, one should be prudent when comparing data across countries or attempting to rank countries by any single indicator. The tables that follow present several kinds of data for each country showing, in the first six columns, certain education indicators and, in the remaining columns to the right, certain indicators of the country's overall development that relate to schooling.

The *Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)* (column 1) is the number of pupils in the official primary school-age group expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. NER is calculated for the entire primary education cycle, which varies in length from country to country, as shown in parentheses at the right side of column 2. *The Percentage of first graders reaching Grade 5 and then the final grade* (column 2) includes all children in a given pupil cohort who are expected to reach these grades with or without repetition.

The *Coefficient of Efficiency* (column 3) is calculated first on the basis of pupils reaching Grade 5, then of pupils completing the final grade, with 100 per cent representing maximum efficiency (see Box 1). *The Percentage of Repeaters* (column 4) is calculated for the entire primary education cycle. The *Estimated Adult Literacy Rates* (column 5) refer to the population aged 15 and over. Column 6, *Public Current Expenditure on Pre-primary and Primary Education,* shows percentages based on government (central, regional, local) current expenditure, i.e. excluding capital expenditure, in relation first to total current public expenditure on all levels of education, then to gross national product (GNP) per capita. These two figures give a rough measure of a country's financial effort in favour of the major components of basic education in relation to its means.

Column 7 shows estimates of GNP per capita based on purchasing power parities (PPP) and expressed in 1995 international dollars. Using PPP-based currency values in international comparisons has the advantage of overcoming the problem of using market exchange rates, which do not always reflect a currency's true purchasing power at home. A PPP-based currency depicts how much it can purchase locally of a common 'market basket' of goods and services, including goods and services that are not traded internationally.

Column 8 shows one indicator of poverty: the *Percentage of people living on less than one dollar per day,* which is a calculated average over the 15-year period 1981-95 expressed in 1995 international dollars (PPP). The *Estimated percentage of economically active children, 10-14 years old* (column 9), gives a rough measure of one prominent cause of non-enrolment and effect of school drop-out. The *Percentage of Population with access to safe water* (column 10) is a proxy measure of the population's exposure to disease (higher percentages should correspond to lower risk), which is another cause of school wastage. *The Total fertility rate* (column 11) is the number of live births in a given year per 1,000 women in the age-group 15-49 years. This indicator tends to decline as the level of education of women rises. *Life expectancy at birth* (column 12) is the average number of years a newborn infant (in 1995) is expected to live if prevailing patterns of mortality in the country stay the same throughout the individual's life.

Finally, the reader is invited to read carefully the footnotes below the tables.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES	1 NET ENROLMENT RATIO a)				2 PERCENTAGE OF GRADE 1 PUPILS (LYA) REACHING: b)		3 COEFFICIENT OF EFFICIENCY (%) b)		4 PERCENTAGE OF REPEATERS	5 ESTIMATED ADULT LITERACY RATES (%)				6 PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE ON PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION (LYA) c)		7 GNP PER CAPITA, 1995 INTERNATIONAL DOLLARS (PPP)	8 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING ON LESS THAN $1 PPP PER DAY	9 ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE CHILDREN, 10-14 YEARS	10 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO SAFE WATER	11 TOTAL FERTILITY RATE	12 LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH
	PRIMARY EDUCATION																				
	1985		LYA		GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE (years)	GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE		MEN		WOMEN		AS % OF TOTAL PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE	PER PUPIL AS % OF GNP PER CAPITA					1995-2000	1995
	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS						1980	1995	1980	1995								
Angola						(4)										1,310			32	6.7	48
Benin	71	36	74	43	61	51 (6)	55	50	25	28.0	48.7	9.7	25.8	59	11	1,760			50	5.8	48
Botswana	84	94	93	98	87	81 (7)	89	88	3	70.4	80.5	43.2	59.9			5,580	35		93	4.4	66
Burkina Faso	29	17	37	24	79	77 (6)	74	71	16	18.8	29.5	4.3	9.2			780		51.1	78	6.6	47
Burundi	47	35	56	48	75	74 (6)	70	68		37.4	49.3	12.0	22.5	42	13	630		49.0	59	6.3	51
Cameroon	77	67	80	69		(6)				58.9	75.0	29.7	52.1			2,110		25.3	50	5.3	57
Cape Verde	98	95	100	100		(6)				64.2	81.4	38.0	63.8			1,870				3.6	65
Central African Republic	74	47	65	43	24	16 (6)	23	20		40.5	68.5	19.0	52.4			1,070			38	4.9	50
Chad					41	31 (6)	35	32	33	46.7	62.1	19.4	34.7	42	10	700			24	5.5	49
Comoros	60	51	58	48	79	74 (6)	57	53	36	56.0	64.2	40.0	50.4	37	8	1,320				5.5	56
Congo					55	37 (6)	42	34	33	64.5	83.1	39.6	67.2	62	13	2,050			34	5.9	51
Congo, Democ. Rep.	81	61	71	50	64	57 (6)	59	58	21	74.6	86.6	45.2	67.7			490			42	6.2	52
Côte d'Ivoire					75	74 (6)	66	66	24	34.3	49.9	13.7	30.0			1,580	18	20.5	75	5.1	50
Equatorial Guinea						(5)				77.2	89.6	44.7	68.1							5.5	48
Eritrea			33	30	79	79 (5)	68	70	19											5.3	52
Ethiopia			34	22	55	55 (6)	69	75	10	32.1	45.5	14.0	25.3	54	37	450	34	42.3	25	7.0	49
Gabon						(6)			39	54.3	73.7	28.0	53.3						68	5.4	55
Gambia	77	48	64	46	88	82 (6)	84	78		37.0	52.8	12.5	24.9	45	12	930			48	5.2	46
Ghana					80	78 (6)	86	88		59.0	75.9	30.5	53.5			1,990		13.3	65	5.3	57
Guinea	36	18			69	54 (6)	71	60	24	34.4	49.9	10.7	21.9	35	11		26		55	6.6	46
Guinea-Bissau	74	38				(6)				53.4	68.0	25.6	42.5			790	87		59	5.4	45
Kenya					68	42 (8)	73	58		72.2	86.3	44.2	70.0	62	15	1,380	50	41.3	53	4.9	55
Lesotho	61	81	64	76	80	68 (7)	69	67	18	70.5	81.1	45.2	62.3	51	14	1,780	50		56	4.9	62
Liberia						(6)				38.0	53.9	11.2	22.4						46	6.3	56
Madagascar			44	49	40	40 (5)	38	38	32							640	72		29	5.7	58
Malawi	46	41	100	100		(8)			18	63.9	71.9	27.8	41.8	59	9	750			37	6.7	45
Mali	22	13	32	21	83	75 (6)	73	66	18	20.2	39.4	8.7	23.1			550		54.5	45	6.6	47
Mauritius	100	100	96	96	99	99 (6)	99	95	6	81.6	87.1	66.5	78.8			13,210			99	2.3	71
Mozambique	56	47	45	35	46	46 (5)	42	46	26	44.0	57.7	12.2	23.3			810			63	6.1	47
Namibia			86	92	76	64 (7)	69	65	18					48	17	4,150			57	4.9	60
Niger	32	17	29	17	77	61 (6)	74	58	16	13.9	20.9	2.8	6.6			750	62	45.2	54	7.1	48
Nigeria					80	74 (6)	84	87		46.7	67.3	23.0	47.3			1,220	29	25.8	51	5.9	51
Rwanda	61	58				(7)				55.0	69.8	29.6	51.6			540	46			6.0	47
Sao Tome & Principe						(4)															67
Senegal	57	39	60	48	85	81 (6)	81	76	14	31.0	43.0	12.1	23.2			1,780	54	31.4	52	5.6	50
Seychelles					98	97 (6)	99	99	0					38	13						71
Sierra Leone						(7)				30.0	45.4	8.5	18.2			580			34	6.1	40
South Africa			95	96	75	68 (7)	77	75		76.9	81.9	74.5	81.7	82	18	5,030	24	0.0	99	3.8	64
Swaziland	78	80	97	98	74	58 (7)	69	61	16	63.8	78.0	57.1	75.6	37	10	2,880				4.5	58
Togo	78	52	98	72	71	61 (6)	60	56	24	49.2	67.0	18.4	37.0	35	10	1,130			63	6.1	56
Uganda						(7)				61.8	73.7	31.7	50.2			1,470	50	45.3	38	7.1	44
United Rep. of Tanzania	55	56	47	48	83	77 (7)	85	86	3	65.8	79.4	34.1	56.8			640	16		38	5.5	52
Zambia	88	81	76	75	81	64 (7)	83	74	3	64.7	85.6	43.2	71.3	42	4	930	85	16.3	27	5.5	48
Zimbabwe	100	100			98	94 (7)	100	99	0	82.8	90.4	68.0	79.9	52	22	2,030	41	29.4	77	4.5	52

a) Bold figures are estimates. b) Bold figures are calculated using the apparent cohort method c) Bold figures include secondary education

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LATIN AMERICA / CARIBBEAN

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES	1 NET ENROLMENT RATIO a)				2 PERCENTAGE OF GRADE 1 PUPILS (LYA) REACHING: b)		3 COEFFICIENT OF EFFICIENCY (%) b)		4 PERCENTAGE OF REPEATERS	5 ESTIMATED ADULT LITERACY RATES (%)				6 PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE ON PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION (LYA) c)		7 GNP PER CAPITA 1995 INTERNATIONAL DOLLARS (PPP)	8 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING ON LESS THAN $1 PPP PER DAY	9 ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE CHILDREN 10-14 YEARS	10 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO SAFE WATER	11 TOTAL FERTILITY RATE	12 LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH
	PRIMARY EDUCATION																					
	1985		LYA		GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE	GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE		MEN		WOMEN		AS % OF TOTAL PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE	PER PUPIL AS % OF GNP PER CAPITA					1995 2000	1995
	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS		(years)				1980	1995	1980	1995								
Antigua & Barbuda																					74
Argentina	96	96	95	95		(7)			6	94.3	96.2	93.6	96.2	51	9	8,310		4.5	71	2.6	73
Bahamas	100	99	92	96	78	76 (6)	87	89		97.5	98.5	96.0	98.0			14,710				1.9	73
Barbados	84	83	78	78		(7)				96.6	98.0	93.7	96.8			10,620				1.7	76
Belize	**89**	**85**	100	98	70	58 (8)	77	71	10					57	11	5,400				3.7	74
Bolivia	90	82	95	87		(8)				80.9	90.5	58.8	76.0	44	10	2,540	7.1	14.4	66	4.4	60
Brazil	81	81	91	91	71	38 (8)	66	44	18	76.3	83.3	72.8	83.2			5,400	28.7	16.1	73	2.2	67
Brit. Virgin Islands						(7)								28	10						
Chile			87	85	92	80 (8)	90	82	6	92.0	95.4	90.9	95.0	63	10	9,520	15	0.0		2.4	74
Colombia	72	72	85	85	75	73 (5)	83	85	9	87.4	91.2	86.5	91.4	39	7	6,130	7.4	6.6	85	2.7	70
Costa Rica	83	84	87	88	89	84 (6)	82	82	9	91.6	94.7	91.4	95.0	38	10	5,850	18.9	5.5	96	2.9	77
Cuba	91	91	99	99	94	92 (6)	93	94	3	91.0	96.2	87.3	95.3	31				0.0	89	1.5	76
Dominica					84	82 (7)	91	93													72
Dominican Republic	70	69	79	83	58	52 (8)	78	79		75.3	82.0	73.5	82.2	54	4	3,870	19.9	16.1	65	2.8	70
Ecuador			91	92	77	74 (6)	83	85	4	85.5	92.0	78.7	88.2	29	6	4,220	30.4		68	3.1	69
El Salvador	63	65	78	80	58	49 (9)	67	64	6	66.4	73.5	59.9	69.8	64	6	2,610			68	3.1	67
Grenada						(7)															71
Guatemala	67	60	76	70	50	45 (6)	54	57		56.3	62.5	41.0	48.6	59	6	3,340	53.3	16.2	64	4.9	66
Guyana			90	89	97	91 (6)	90	90	4	96.4	98.6	93.1	97.5	71		2,420				2.3	65
Haiti	57	54	25	26		(6)				36.2	48.0	28.9	42.2			910		25.3	28	4.6	58
Honduras	90	92	89	91	60	54 (6)	63	65	12	64.0	72.6	60.6	72.7	53	10	1,900	46.5		87	4.3	69
Jamaica	92	95	100	100		(6)				73.2	80.8	81.1	89.1	32	10	3,540	4.7		86	2.4	74
Mexico	100	100	100	100	85	82 (6)	83	85	7	86.2	91.8	79.9	87.4	49	12	6,400	14.9	6.7	83	2.7	71
Nicaragua	74	79	82	85	47	41 (6)	51	53	15	61.0	64.6	60.8	66.6			2,000	43.8	14.1	53	3.8	68
Panama	90	90	91	92		(6)				86.3	91.4	84.9	90.2	30	10	5,980	25.6		93	2.6	73
Paraguay	90	89	89	89	71	65 (6)	72	73	8	89.9	93.5	83.7	90.6	48	7	3,650		7.9	42	4.2	71
Peru	95	92	91	90		(6)			15	88.8	94.5	71.0	83.0			3,770	49.4	2.5	72	2.9	67
St. Kitts & Nevis						(7)								38	6	9,410					70
St. Lucia					96	95 (7)	98	98						45	11						72
St. Vincent/ Grenadines						(7)															71
Suriname						(6)				91.5	95.1	83.8	91.0	60	8	2,250				2.4	71
Trinidad & Tobago	91	92	83	94	100	94 (7)	96	94	6	96.9	98.8	93.3	97.0	41	11	8,610			97	2.1	72
Uruguay	87	86	95	95	97	96 (6)	85	88	10	94.3	96.9	95.3	97.7	30	6	6,630		2.1	75	2.3	73
Venezuela	86	89	87	90	78	39 (9)	75	46		86.2	91.8	82.1	90.3			7,900	11.8	1.0	79	2.9	72

a) Bold figures are estimates. b) Bold figures are calculated using the apparent cohort method. c) Bold figures include secondary education.

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ARAB STATES

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES	1 NET ENROLMENT RATIO a)				2 PERCENTAGE OF GRADE 1 PUPILS (LYA) REACHING: b)		3 COEFFICIENT OF EFFICIENCY (%) b)		4 PERCENTAGE OF REPEATERS	5 ESTIMATED ADULT LITERACY RATES (%)				6 PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE ON PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION (LYA) c)		7 GNP PER CAPITA, 1995 (INTERNATIONAL DOLLARS) (PPP)	8 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING ON LESS THAN $1 PPP PER DAY	9 ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE CHILDREN, 10-14 YEARS	10 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO SAFE WATER	11 TOTAL FERTILITY RATE	12 LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH
	PRIMARY EDUCATION																					
	1985		LYA		GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE (years)	GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE		MEN		WOMEN		AS % OF TOTAL PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE	PER PUPIL AS % OF GNP PER CAPITA					1995 2000	1995
	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS						1980	1995	1980	1995								
Algeria	94	78	99	91	94	90 (6)	87	84	9	54.8	73.9	24.3	49.0			5,300	2	1.6	78	3.8	68
Bahrain	94	98	99	100	95	85 (6)	91	85	5	79.5	89.1	60.2	79.4			13,400				2.9	72
Djibouti	37	26	37	28	79	77 (6)	78	73	15	45.3	60.3	18.1	32.7							5.4	48
Egypt	88	67	95	82	98	97 (5)	93	93	5	53.9	63.6	25.5	38.8	64	13	3,820	8	11.2	79	3.4	65
Iraq	99	87	81	71		(6)				55.3	70.7	25.0	45.0					3.0	78	5.3	67
Jordan			89	89	95	67(10)	96	76	1	82.4	93.4	53.9	79.4	58	14	4,060	3	0.7	98	5.1	69
Kuwait	88	85	61	61		94 (4)		94	3	72.8	82.2	59.1	74.9			23,790				2.8	75
Lebanon						(5)				90.6	94.7	82.0	90.3								
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya			98	96		(9)				72.9	87.9	31.0	63.0						94	2.8	69
Mauritania			64	55	64	58 (6)	63	61	16	41.4	49.6	18.7	26.3			1,540	31		97	5.9	64
Morocco	73	48	81	62	78	72 (6)	74	74	12	42.0	56.6	16.2	31.0	33	12	3,340	1	5.6	66	5.0	53
Oman	70	63	72	70	96	94 (6)	88	87	8					48	13	8,140			55	3.1	64
Palestine						(6)			4										82	7.2	70
Qatar	88	94	81	80	99	98 (6)	96	93	5	72.0	79.2	64.8	79.9			17,690				3.8	71
Saudi Arabia	60	42	66	60	94	91 (6)	87	86	8					82	21	8,820		0.0	95	5.9	71
Somalia	11	6				(8)													31	7.0	48
Sudan					94	81 (6)	96	86		43.1	57.7	17.0	34.6						60	4.6	54
Syrian Arab Republic	100	92	95	87	94	89 (6)	87	86	7	72.4	85.7	34.4	55.8		8	5,320		5.8	85	4.0	68
Tunisia	99	87	98	95	91	85 (6)	81	76	17	61.1	78.6	32.3	54.6	43	15	5,000	4	0.0	98	2.9	69
United Arab Emirates	76	77	84	82	98	96 (6)	94	92	5	71.8	78.9	63.7	79.8			16,470			95	3.5	74
Yemen						(9)												20.2	61	7.6	51

a) Bold figures are estimates. b) Bold figures are calculated using the apparent cohort method. c) Bold figures include secondary education.

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EASTERN ASIA / OCEANIA

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES	1 NET ENROLMENT RATIO a)				2 PERCENTAGE OF GRADE 1 PUPILS (LYA) REACHING: b)		3 COEFFICIENT OF EFFICIENCY (%) b)		4 PERCENTAGE OF REPEATERS	5 ESTIMATED ADULT LITERACY RATES (%)				6 PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE ON PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION (LYA) c)		7 GNP PER CAPITA, 1995 (INTERNATIONAL DOLLARS) (PPP)	8 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING ON LESS THAN $1 PPP PER DAY	9 ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE CHILDREN, 10-14 YEARS	10 PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO SAFE WATER	11 TOTAL FERTILITY RATE	12 LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH
	PRIMARY EDUCATION																				
	1985		LYA		GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE (years)	GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE		MEN		WOMEN		AS % OF TOTAL PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE	PER PUPIL AS % OF GNP PER CAPITA					1995 2000	1995
	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS						1980	1995	1980	1995								
Brunei Darussalam	78	78	91	91	97	92 (6)	92	87	9	85.7	92.6	67.8	83.4							2.7	74
Cambodia					50	50 (5)	44	44	30										36	4.5	53
China	95	86	99	98	94	94 (5)	93	93	2	78.6	89.9	52.7	72.7	37	6	2,920	29.4	11.6	67	1.8	69
Cook Islands						(6)															
D.P.R. Korea																					71
Fiji	97	97	99	100		(6)				87.0	93.8	78.9	89.3			5,780				2.8	72
Indonesia	100	95	99	95	89	86 (6)	84	85	8	77.5	89.6	57.7	78.0			3,800	14.5	9.6	62	2.6	64
Kiribati					91	89 (7)	97	96	0												
Korea, Republic of	94	95	93	94	100	100 (6)	100	100	0	97.4	99.3	90.1	96.7	46	16	11,450			93	1.7	
Lao People's D. R.	51	40	75	61	53	53 (5)	51	51	26	55.6	69.4	27.7	44.4	42	5				52	6.7	52
Malaysia			91	92	94	93 (6)	98	98	0					35	9	9,020	5.6	3.2	78	3.2	71
Mongolia			78	81		90 (3)		95	1	81.5	88.6	63.3	77.2	82	14	1,950			80	3.3	65
Myanmar						(5)				85.7	88.7	68.2	77.7	48	4				60	3.3	59
Papua New Guinea					59	52 (6)	73	72	0	70.0	81.0	45.1	62.7			2,420		19.3	28	4.7	57
Philippines	97	96	98	97	70	69 (6)	85	87		90.6	95.0	88.7	94.3			2,850	27.5	8.0	86	3.6	67
Samoa			100	99		(8)			2											3.8	68
Singapore	99	99	100	100		(6)				91.6	95.9	74.0	86.3	26	7	22,770			100	1.8	75
Solomon Islands					81	73 (6)	83	76	9							2,190		28.9		4.9	71
Thailand						(6)				92.3	96.0	84.0	91.6	53	11	7,540		16.2	89	1.7	69
Tonga					94	90 (6)	99	88	8					39							
Tuvalu					100	96 (8)	100	99	0												
Vanuatu					61	53 (6)	63	61	1					56		2,290					65
Viet Nam						(5)				90.0	96.5	77.6	91.2					9.1	43	2.9	66

a) Bold figures are estimates. b) Bold figures are calculated using the apparent cohort method. c) Bold figures include secondary education.

SOUTHERN ASIA

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES	NET ENROLMENT RATIO a)				PERCENTAGE OF GRADE 1 PUPILS (LYA) REACHING: b)				COEFFICIENT OF EFFICIENCY (%) b)	PERCENTAGE OF REPEATERS	ESTIMATED ADULT LITERACY RATES (%)				PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE ON PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION (LYA) c)		GNP PER CAPITA, 1995 INTERNATIONAL DOLLARS (PPP)	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION LIVING ON LESS THAN $1 PPP PER DAY	ESTIMATED PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE CHILDREN, 10 TO 14 YEARS	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION WITH ACCESS TO SAFE WATER	TOTAL FERTILITY RATE	LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH
	1				2				3	4	5				6		7	8	9	10	11	12
	PRIMARY EDUCATION																					
	1985		LYA		GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE (years)	GRADE 5	FINAL GRADE			MEN		WOMEN		AS % OF TOTAL PUBLIC CURRENT EXPENDITURE	PER PUPIL AS % OF GNP PER CAPITA					1995-2000	1995
	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS							1980	1995	1980	1995								
Afghanistan	23	11	42	15		(6)					32.6	47.2	5.7	15.0	44	6				12	6.9	45
Bangladesh	64	48	66	58		(5)					41.3	49.4	17.2	26.1			1,380		30.1	97	3.1	57
Bhutan					82	71 (7)	70	66	19		41.1	56.2	14.9	28.1			1,260		55.1	58	5.9	52
India	86	65	90	74	62	62 (5)	81	81			55.3	65.5	25.3	37.7	38	11	1,400	52.5	14.4	81	3.1	62
Iran	85	72	100	93	90	90 (5)	88	88	7						28	7	5,470		4.7	90	4.8	69
Maldives					91	91 (5)	97	97			90.6	93.3	89.2	93.0	67	17	3,080				6.8	
Nepal	79	36	79	56	52	52 (5)	58	58			30.6	40.9	7.3	14.0	45	8	1,170	53.1	45.2	63	4.9	55
Pakistan						(5)					38.4	50.0	14.7	24.4			2,230	11.6	17.7	74	5.0	63
Sri Lanka					83	83 (5)	87	87	7		90.9	93.4	79.5	87.2	73	7	3,250	4		57	2.1	73

a) Bold figures are estimates. b) Bold figures are calculated using the apparent cohort method. c) Bold figures include secondary education.

Annex II

Composition of regions

LESS DEVELOPED REGIONS

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Angola*
Benin*
Botswana
Burkina Faso*
Burundi*
Cameroon
Cape Verde*
Central African Republic*
Chad*
Comoros*
Congo
Côte d'Ivoire
Dem. Rep. of Congo*
Equatorial Guinea*
Eritrea*
Ethiopia*
Gabon
Gambia*
Ghana
Guinea*
Guinea-Bissau*
Kenya
Lesotho*
Liberia*
Madagascar*
Malawi*
Mali*
Mauritius
Mozambique*
Namibia
Niger*
Nigeria
Rwanda*
Sao Tome and Principe*
Senegal
Seychelles
Sierra Leone*
South Africa
Swaziland
Togo*
Uganda*
Tanzania, United Republic of*
Zambia*
Zimbabwe

ARAB STATES

Algeria
Bahrain
Djibouti*
Egypt
Iraq
Jordan
Kuwait
Lebanon
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Mauritania*
Morocco
Oman
Qatar
Saudi Arabia
Somalia*
Sudan*
Syrian Arab Republic
Tunisia
United Arab Emirates
Yemen*

LATIN AMERICA/CARIBBEAN

Antigua and Barbuda
Argentina
Bahamas
Barbados
Belize
Bolivia
Brazil
British Virgin Islands
Chile
Colombia
Cuba
Dominica
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
El Salvador
Grenada
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti*
Honduras
Jamaica
Mexico
Netherlands Antilles
Nicaragua
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Puerto Rico
Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Suriname
Trinidad and Tobago
Uruguay
Venezuela

EASTERN ASIA/OCEANIA

Brunei Darussalam
Cambodia*
China
Cook Islands
Fiji
Indonesia
Kiribati*
Korea, Democratic People's Rep. of
Korea, Republic of
Lao People's Democratic Rep.*
Malaysia
Mongolia
Myanmar*
Niue
Papua New Guinea
Philippines
Samoa*
Singapore
Solomon Islands*
Thailand
Tonga
Tuvalu*
Vanuatu*
Viet Nam

SOUTHERN ASIA

Afghanistan*
Bangladesh*
Bhutan*
India
Islamic Republic of Iran
Maldives*
Nepal*
Pakistan
Sri Lanka

OTHER LESS DEVELOPED

Cyprus
Malta
Turkey

COUNTRIES IN TRANSITION

Albania
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Bulgaria
Croatia
Czech Republic
Estonia
Georgia
Hungary
Kazakhstan
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Lithuania
Poland
Rep. of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Slovakia
Slovenia
Tajikistan
The FYR of Macedonia
Turkmenistan
Ukraine
Uzbekistan
Yugoslavia, federal Republic of

MORE DEVELOPED REGIONS

EUROPE

Andorra
Austria
Belgium
Denmark
Faeroe Islands
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Holy See
Iceland
Ireland
Italy
Liechtenstein
Luxembourg
Monaco
Netherlands
Norway
Portugal
San Marino
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom

ASIA/OCEANIA

Australia
Israel
Japan
New Zealand

NORTH AMERICA

Canada
United States

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* Least developed countries

Annex III

Glossary

Access to health care: is measured by the percentage of the population for whom treatment of common diseases and injuries, including essential drugs on the national list, is available within a one hour walk or travel.

Access to safe water: is measured by the percentage of the population with access to adequate amounts of safe water (i.e. treated surface waters or uncontaminated water from springs, wells, and protected boreholes).

Basic learning needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning.

Coefficient of efficiency is a measure of the internal efficiency of an education system obtained by dividing the ideal number of pupil-years required for a pupil cohort to complete a level or cycle of education (e.g. the primary level) by the estimated total number of pupil-years actually spent by the same pupil cohort. The reciprocal of the coefficient of efficiency is the **input-output ratio**.

Compulsory education refers to the number of years or the age-span during which children and youth are legally obliged to attend school.

Developed countries, also called *industrialized countries*, includes the countries of Europe, the ex-Soviet Union, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States of America.

Drop-out rate is the percentage of pupils dropping out from a given grade in a given school-year.

Early childhood development programmes offer a structured and purposeful set of learning activities either in a formal institution (pre-school) or within a non-formal childcare programme. ECD programmes generally focus on children from three years of age. This includes all pre-school programmes that conform to the ISCED Level 0 definition.

Economically active children are children who are engaged in producing goods or services in the home or workplace and for which they may or may not receive a wage.

Educational institution is a school or other institution that has as its sole or main purpose the provision of education or training. Such institutions are normally accredited, or sanctioned, by some public authority.

Formal education refers to organized and purposeful learning provided through a country's system of schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions recognized by the public authorities.

Graduate is a pupil who successfully completes the final year of a given level of education (e.g. primary education).

Gross enrolment ratio (GER): the total enrolment in a level or cycle of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage (sometimes exceeding 100 per cent) of the population in the officially defined school-age group for the level or cycle concerned.

Gross National Product (GNP) represents the value of all finished goods and services produced in an economy during one year. *GNP per capita*, i.e. a country's GNP divided by its population, is often used as an indicator of a country's general wealth. *PPP estimates of GNP per capita* are calculated by converting GNP to US dollars using 'purchasing power parities' (PPP) instead of commercial exchange rates as conversion factors. The resulting estimates are expressed in *international dollars*, a unit of account that has the same purchasing power over total GNP as the US dollar in a given year. The *purchasing power parities* (PPPs) are the units of a national currency required to purchase a standard basket of goods and services within a country as compared to the cost in US dollars of that same basket purchased in the United States. Thus, PPPs serve as terms of exchange that equalise national price levels.

Illiteracy is the lack of ability to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one's daily life. Illiteracy should not to be confused with ignorance.

Less developed countries are sometimes called 'developing countries', as distinct from the 'developed countries'. Within this large group of countries, the 48 **least developed countries** constitute a subset recognized by the United Nations as facing long-term impediments to growth, low levels of human resource development and severe structural weaknesses.

Life expectancy at birth is the average number of years a new born infant is expected to live if the prevailing patterns of mortality in the country remain the same throughout his or her life.

Literacy is the ability to read and write with understanding a simple statement related to one's daily life. It involves a continuum of reading and writing skills, and often includes also basic arithmetic skills (*numeracy*).

Literacy rate is the number of literate adults expressed as a percentage of the total adult population, 15 years of age or older.

Net enrolment ratio (NER) is the number of pupils in the official school-age group expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age-group.

New entrant is a pupil who enters the first grade of primary education for the first time.

Non-formal education refers to organized and sustained educational activities of various durations that do not correspond to the definition of formal education. Non-formal education can take place both within and outside educational institutions, and caters to persons of all ages. Depending on country contexts, it may comprise educational programmes to impart literacy and numeracy skills, life-skills, work-skills, and/or general culture to out-of-school children, youth and adults. Non-formal education programmes do not necessarily correspond to the levels and cycles of formal education.

Out-of-school children are those in the official school-age group who are not enrolled in school.

Percentage of people living on less than $1 (PPP) per day is a widely used measure of poverty. A person is considered to be poor if he or she lives in a household having a total income or consumption per person that is less than $1 per day calculated using purchasing power parities (PPP). See also Gross National Product.

Public current expenditure on education refers to expenditure on educational activities by the public authorities (central, provincial and local), excluding capital expenditure (e.g. for school construction).

Promotion rate is the percentage of pupils promoted to the next grade in the following school year. Some countries practice automatic promotion, meaning that all pupils are promoted, regardless of their scholastic achievement.

Pupil is a young person who is enrolled in an educational programme. As used here, 'pupil' refers to children enrolled in primary school.

Pupil-years: is a non-monetary measure of educational inputs or resources. One pupil-year denotes the resources spent to maintain a pupil in school for one year.

Repeater: a pupil who is enrolled in the same grade in the current school year as in the previous school year.

Repetition rate: Percentage of pupils who are enrolled in the same grade in the following school year as in the current school year.

Survival rate: Percentage of a cohort of pupils, who enrol together in the first grade of primary education, that reaches a given grade (e.g. Grade 5) or the final grade of an education cycle either with or without repeating a grade.

School-age population: number of children in the officially defined primary school age-group, whether enrolled in school or not.

Teachers are persons who, in their professional capacity, guide and direct pupils' learning experiences in gaining knowledge, attitudes and skills that are stipulated by a defined curriculum programme. In calculating pupil/teacher ratios, other educational personnel, such as administrators and support staff are not taken into account.

Total fertility rate is the number of live births in a given year per thousand women in the age-group 15-49.

Universal primary education (UPE): Full enrolment of all children in the primary school age-group, i.e. 100 per cent net enrolment ratio.

Wastage, in respect to education, refers to human and material resources spent or 'wasted' on pupils who have to repeat a grade or who drop out of school before completing a cycle. It denotes the inefficiency of a school system and refers also to the wasted opportunities for these children to develop the knowledge, skills attitudes and values they need to live productive lives and to continue learning

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The **INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIVE FORUM ON EDUCATION FOR ALL** is the inter-agency body established to guide and monitor follow-up action to the WORLD CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION FOR ALL: MEETING BASIC LEARNING NEEDS, held in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990. The EFA Forum, as it is generally known, periodically brings together senior policy-makers and specialists from developing countries, international and bilateral development agencies, and non-governmental organizations and foundations. At its first meeting (Paris, December 1991) the EFA Forum focused on the prospects of achieving universal primary education. At its second meeting (New Delhi, September 1993), the EFA Forum examined the prospects of providing quality education for all. The EFA Forum's third meeting (Amman, June 1996) reviewed overall progress towards EFA goals at the mid-decade and outlined priorities for action during the remainder of the decade.

An inter-agency Steering Committee decides the EFA Forum's workplan, which is carried out by the EFA Forum Secretariat based at UNESCO headquarters in Paris, in cooperation with various partners. During the 1995-1996 programme period, the Forum's core activities were funded by contributions from Denmark, Finland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, as well as the Forum's five "Convenors": UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank.

The EFA Forum's current programme (1996-1999) has three specific objectives:

- To strengthen EFA monitoring and coordinate the end-of-decade assessment of progress towards EFA;
- To reinforce and extend the EFA alliance, particularly to work with partners who shape public opinion and policy; and
- To promote and accelerate EFA action in the developing countries through advocacy and support activities carried out at regional and global levels.

The Education for All 2000 Assessment constitutes the main focus of the EFA Forum's activities and entails:

- providing guidelines to all countries in undertaking their own EFA assessment
- collecting and analyzing data on basic education in developing countries;
- commissioning a series of country case studies on specific aspects of EFA;
- commissioning sample surveys in a cross-section of developing countries on the conditions of learning in primary schools and on learning achievement;
- examining the policies and practices of donors who support basic education;
- collecting the views of major groups of NGOs on EFA;
- organizing a series of regional EFA policy review seminars; and
- presenting the results of these activities to the next global EFA Forum meeting in 2000; and
- publicizing the results and the main EFA issues through the media.

The EFA Forum is working closely with the World Association of Newspapers to promote better media coverage of important education issues and the use of newspapers as learning materials in schools and in out-of-school basic education.

The Forum Secretariat publishes the quarterly *EFA 2000 Bulletin* in five languages, a series of topical reports entitled *Education for All: Status and Trends*, as well as occasional brochures and papers. It also maintains an Internet Web site, http://www.education.unesco.org/efa that posts all its principal documents, basic EFA texts, and current news items.

World leaders face a serious challenge in building education systems capable of providing basic education for all children, youth and adults. The World Conference on Education for All, (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) called on countries to universalize primary education, which means that all children should enter school when they are of age, complete the entire primary cycle, and learn at an appropriate level. Yet today, only three out of four pupils in the developing world reach Grade 5, large numbers have to repeat one or more grades, and 84 million primary school-age children, of which three out of five are girls, never enter school at all.

What can be done to make schools more efficient? What can decision-makers, communities and schools do to enrol all children and enable them to complete at least the entire primary cycle?

This fourth report in the series *Education for All: Status and Trends* highlights, with the use of graphics, the present situation of school wastage and reveals its enormous costs on educational systems, individuals and societies. It cites actual examples of what some countries are doing to address the problem. Statistical tables present selected educational and socio-economic indicators for 131 developing countries and territories.

This report is published by UNESCO for the International Consultative Forum on Education for All, the global mechanism established to promote and monitor progress toward the goal of Education for All (EFA).

For further information, please contact:

EFA Forum Secretariat

7, Place de Fontenoy
75352 Paris 07 SP, France
fax: +33 (0)1 45 68 56 29
e-mail: efa@unesco.org
Internet web site: http://www.education.unesco.org/efa

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